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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PRINCIPAL EVENTS

OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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POSTHUMOUS WORK OF

THE BARONESS DE STAËL.

EDITED BY

THE DUKE DE BROGLIE, AND THE BARON DE STAËL.

Les Révolutions qui arrivent dans les grand états
ne sont point un effet du hazard, ni du caprice
de peuples. MEMOIRES DE SULLY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS.

PART III.

CHAP. I.

Page
On the Emigration 1

CHAP. II.

Prediction of M. Necker on the Fate of the Constitution of 1791..... 10

CHAP. III.

Of the different Parties which composed the Legislative Assembly..... 25

CHAP. IV.

Spirit of the Decrees of the Legislative Assembly.. 32

CHAP. V.

Of the First War between France and Europe.... 35

CHAP. XXIV.

Page
Of the Introduction of Military Government into France by the Occurrences of the 18th Fructidor 177

CHAP. XXV.

Private Anecdotes 186

CHAP. XXVI.

Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. Arrival of General Bonaparte at Paris 194

CHAP. XXVII.

Preparations of General Bonaparte for proceeding to Egypt. His Opinion on the Invasion of Switzerland 205

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Invasion of Switzerland 211

CHAP. XXIX.

Of the Termination of the Directory 219

PART IV.

CHAP. I.

News from Egypt: Return of Bonaparte 225

CHAP. II.

Page

Revolution of the 18th Brumaire 231

CHAP. III.

Of the Establishment of the Consular Constitution 244

CHAP. IV.

Progress of Bonaparte to Absolute Power 252

CHAP. V.

Should England have made Peace with Bonaparte at his Accession to the Consulate? 265

CHAP. VI.

Of the solemn Celebration of the Concordat at Nôtre-Dame 273

CHAP. VII.

M. Necker's last Work under the Consulship of Bonaparte 281

CHAP. VIII.

Of Exile 298

CHAP. IX.

Of the last Days of M. Necker 308

CHAP. X.

Abstract of M. Necker's Principles on Government 316

CHAP. XI.

Bonaparte Emperor. The Counter Revolution effected by him 322

CHAP. XII.

Page

Of the Conduct of Napoleon towards the Continent of Europe 336

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Means employed by Bonaparte to attack England 343

CHAP. XIV.

On the Spirit of the French Army 350

CHAP. XV.

Of the Legislation and Administration under Bonaparte 362

CHAP. XVI.

Of Literature under Bonaparte 372

CHAP. XVII.

A Saying of Bonaparte printed in the Moniteur .. 379

CHAP. XVIII.

On the political Doctrine of Bonaparte 381

CHAP. XIX.

Intoxication of Power; Reverses and Abdication of Bonaparte 393

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PRINCIPAL EVENTS

OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

On the Emigration.

IT is of importance to make a distinction between the voluntary and the forced emigration. After the overthrow of the throne in 1792, and the commencement of the reign of terror, we all emigrated to escape the dangers with which every one was threatened. It was not one of the least crimes of the government of that day, to have considered as culpable those who removed from their homes only to escape assassination at the hands of the people or of a tribunal; and to comprise in their proscriptive edicts not only

men able to carry arms, but the aged, the women, and even the children. The emigration of 1791, on the other hand, being caused by no kind of danger, should be considered as an act of party; and under this point of view, we can form an opinion on it agreeably to political principles.

At the moment the King was arrested at Varennes, and brought back captive to Paris, a great number of the *noblesse* determined on quitting their country to claim the aid of foreign powers, and prevail on them to repress the revolution by force of arms. The earliest emigrants obliged the men of family who had remained in France, to follow them; they enjoined this sacrifice in the name of a kind of honour connected with the *ésprit du corps*, and the caste of French nobles were seen covering the public roads, and repairing to the camps of foreigners on the hostile frontiers. Posterity, I believe, will pronounce that the *noblesse* on this occasion deviated from the true principles which serve as a basis to the social union. Supposing that men of family would not have done better to take part from the outset in institutions rendered necessary by the progress of information and the aggrandizement of the *Tiers Etat*, at least ten thousand more of the *noblesse*

around the King's person might have perhaps prevented him from being dethroned.

But, without wandering into suppositions, which may always be contested, there are in politics, as in morals, certain inflexible duties; and the first of all is never to abandon our country to foreigners, even when they come forward to support with their armies the system which we consider the best. One party thinks itself the only virtuous, the only legitimate body; another the only national, the only patriotic. Who is to decide between them? Was the triumph of foreign armies a judgment of God on the French? The judgment of God, says the proverb, is the voice of the people. Had a civil war been necessary to measure the strength of the contending parties, and to manifest on which side lay the majority, the nation would by this have become greater in its own eyes, as in those of its rivals. The Vendean leaders inspire a thousand times more respect than those Frenchmen who have excited the different coalitions of Europe against their country. Victory in civil war can be obtained only by dint of courage, energy, or justice; it is to the faculties of the soul that the success of such a struggle belongs; but the introduction of foreign powers into one's country may be ac-

complished by an intrigue, by an accidental cause, or by connexion with a favoured general or minister. Emigrants have at all times made a sport of the independence of their country; they would have it, as a jealous lover wishes his mistress—dead or faithful; and the weapon with which they imagine they are fighting the factious, often escapes from their hands, and inflicts a mortal blow on that country which they intended to save.

The nobility of France unfortunately consider themselves rather as the countrymen of the nobility of the world at large, than as the fellow-citizens of Frenchmen. According to their manner of judging, the race of the ancient conquerors of Europe owes itself mutual aid from one empire to another; but a people, on the other hand, conscious of forming a uniform whole, naturally wish to be the disposers of their own fate; and from the times of antiquity down to our days, no free, or even merely spirited people, has ever borne, without horror, the interference of a foreign government in its domestic quarrels.

Circumstances peculiar to the history of France have in that country separated the privileged classes and the *Tiers Etat* in a more decided manner than in any other part of Eu-

rope. Urbanity of manners concealed political divisions; but the pecuniary exemptions, the number of offices conferred exclusively on the *noblesse*, the inequality in the application of the law, the etiquette at court, the whole inheritance of the rights of conquest transformed into arbitrary favours, created in France almost two nations out of one. The consequence was, that the emigrant nobility wished to treat almost the whole French people as revolted vassals; and, far from remaining in their country, either to triumph over the prevailing opinion, or to unite themselves to it, they considered it a plainer course to call in the *gendarmerie* of Europe, that they might bring Paris to its senses. It was, they said, to deliver the majority from the yoke of a factious minority, that they had recourse to the arms of the neighbouring allies. A nation that should stand in need of foreigners to deliver it from a yoke of any kind, would be so degraded, that no virtue could long be displayed in it; it would have to blush at once for its oppressors and its deliverers. Henry IV. admitted, it is true, foreign corps into his army; but he had them as auxiliaries, and was nowise dependent on them. He opposed English and German Protestants to the Leaguers, controlled by Spanish Catholics; but he

was always surrounded by a French force of sufficient strength to make him master of his allies. In 1791 the system of emigration was false and reprehensible, for a handful of Frenchmen was lost in the midst of all the bayonets of Europe. There were, moreover, at that time, many methods of coming to a mutual understanding in France; men of great worth were at the head of government; errors in politics admitted of remedy, and judicial murders had not yet been committed.

Emigration, far from keeping up the respectability of the *noblesse*, was the cause of greatly reducing it. A new generation has risen up in the absence of the men of family, and as this generation has lived, prospered, and triumphed without the privileged classes, it still thinks itself capable of maintaining itself alone. The emigrants, on the other hand, living always in the same circle, are persuaded that whatever is different from their ancient habits is rebellion: they have thus acquired by degrees the same kind of inflexibility which marks the clergy. All political traditions have become in their eyes articles of faith, and abuses stand with them in the light of dogmas. Their attachment to the royal family under its misfortunes is worthy of the highest respect; but why

make this attachment consist in a hatred of free institutions and in a love of absolute power? And why object to reasoning in politics, as if sacred mysteries, not human affairs, were in question? In 1791 the aristocratic party was separated from the nation in fact and by right: in one way by quitting France, in another by not acknowledging that the wish of a great people ought to have influence in the choice of its government. "What signify nations," they were accustomed to repeat: "what we want is armies." But do not armies form a part of nations? Does not public opinion make its way sooner or later even into the ranks of soldiers, and in what manner is it possible to stifle that which at present animates every enlightened country—the free and perfect knowledge of the interest and the rights of all.

The emigrants must have been satisfied by their own feelings, in different circumstances, that the step they had taken was reprehensible. When they found themselves in the midst of foreign uniforms, when they heard those German dialects, no sound of which recalled to them the recollections of their past life, is it possible that they could still think themselves devoid of blame? Did they not see the whole of France arrayed to defend herself on the opposite bank?

Did they not experience unspeakable distress on recognizing the national music, on hearing the accents of their native province, in that camp which they were obliged to call hostile? How many of them must have returned with sorrow among the Germans, among the English, among so many other nations whom they were ordered to consider as their allies! Ah! it is impossible to transport one's household gods to a foreign hearth. The emigrants, even at the time that they were carrying on war against France, were often proud of the victories of their countrymen. As emigrants they were defeated, but as Frenchmen they triumphed: and the joy which they experienced was the noble inconsistency of generous hearts. At the battle of La Hogue, James II. exclaimed, on seeing the defeat of that French fleet which sustained his own cause against England, "See how my brave English fight;" and this sentiment gave him a greater right to the throne than any one of the arguments employed for his restoration. In truth, the love of country is inextinguishable, as are all the affections on which our first duties are founded. Often does a long absence, or party quarrels, break asunder all your connexions; you no longer know an individual in that country which is yours; but at its name, or at the

sight of it, your whole heart is moved; and far from its being necessary to combat such impressions as chimeras, they ought to serve as a directing guide to a man of virtue.

Several political writers have ascribed to emigration all the misfortunes that have happened to France. It is not fair to impute to the errors of one party, the crimes committed by another; but it seems, however, clear that a democratic crisis became much more probable, when all the men employed under the old monarchy, and capable, had they been willing, of contributing to recompose the new, had abandoned their country. Equality then presenting itself from all quarters, men of warm passions gave themselves up too much to the democratic torrent; and the people, seeing royalty no where but in the person of the King, believed that to overthrow one man sufficed to found a republic.

CHAPTER II.

Prediction of M. Necker on the Fate of the Constitution of 1791.

DURING the last fourteen years of his life, M. Necker did not quit his estate of Coppet in Switzerland. He lived in the most complete retirement; but the repose arising from dignity does not exclude activity of mind, and he never ceased to attend, with the greatest solicitude, to every event which occurred in France. The works composed by him at different eras in the revolution possess a prophetic character; because, in examining the defects of the different constitutions which prevailed for a time in France, he explained beforehand the consequences of these defects, and predictions of this kind could not fail to be realized.

M. Necker joined to a surprising sagacity of intellect, a sensibility to the fate of mankind, and in particular of France, of which, I believe, there is no example in any writer on political topics. These topics are commonly treated in an abstract manner, and are almost always

founded on calculation; but M. Necker was intent above all on considering the relations which that science bore to individual morality, to the happiness and dignity of nations. He is the Fenelon of politics, if I may venture thus to express myself, in honouring these two great men by the kindred nature of their virtues.

The first work published by him in 1791 is entitled, "On the Administration of M. Necker, by Himself." At the close of a very profound political discussion on the various compensations that ought to have been granted to the privileged classes, for the loss of their ancient rights, he says, addressing himself to the Assembly, "I know that I shall be blamed for my obstinate attachment to the principles of justice, and attempts will be made to depress it, by giving it the name of aristocratic pity. I know better than you the nature of my pity. It was first for you that I felt that sentiment; but you were then without union and without strength; it was first for you that I sustained a conflict. And at the time when I complained so much of the indifference shown to you; when I spoke of the respect that was due to you; when I showed a perpetual disquietude for the fate of the people; it was then that by mere trifling with words your enemies endeavoured to ridicule my sentiments. I

would willingly love others than you, now that you abandon me; I would it were in my power; but I possess not that consolation; your enemies and mine have placed between them and me a barrier which I shall never seek to burst; and they must necessarily hate me for ever, since they have made me answerable for their own faults. Yet it was not I who prompted them to make an immoderate use of their former power; it was not I who rendered them inflexible when it became necessary to commence a treaty with fortune. Ah! if they were not under oppression, if they were not unhappy, how many reproaches could not I make to them! And when I defend them still in their rights and properties, they will not, I trust, believe that I think for a moment of regaining their favour. I now desire no connexion with them, nor with any one; it is with my recollections, with my thoughts, that I endeavour to live and die; when I fix my attention on the purity of the sentiments that have guided me, I find no where a suitable association; and when, in the want experienced by every feeling mind, I form that association, I do it in hope, with the upright men of every country, with those, so few in number, whose first passion is the love of doing good on earth."

M. Necker felt bitter regret for the loss of

that popularity which he had sacrificed without hesitation to his duty. Some persons have blamed him for the importance that he set upon it. Woe to the statesman who does not stand in need of public opinion! These are either courtiers or usurpers; they flatter themselves with obtaining, by intrigue, or by terror, what a generous mind wishes to owe only to the esteem of its fellows.

When my father and I were walking together under those lofty trees at Coppet, which still seem to me the friendly witnesses of his noble thoughts, he asked me once, whether I thought, that the whole of France was infected with those popular suspicions by which he had been endangered on the road from Paris into Switzerland. "It seems to me," he said, "that in several provinces they acknowledged, down to the latest day of my administration, the purity of my intentions, and my attachment to France." Hardly had he put this question to me, than he dreaded being too much affected by my answer; "Let us talk no more on that subject," he said, "God reads in my heart: that is enough." I did not venture to give him a consoling answer on that day, so much of restrained emotion did I see in his whole frame. Ah! how harsh and narrow-minded, must be the enemies of such a

man! It was to him that we ought to address the words of Ben Jonson, when speaking of his illustrious friend, the Chancellor of England. "I pray God to give you strength in your adversity; for as to greatness, you cannot want it."

M. Necker, at the time when the democratic party, then in the plenitude of power, made him overtures to join them, expressed himself with the greatest energy on the melancholy situation to which the royal authority was reduced. And, although he expected, perhaps, too much from the ascendency of morality and eloquence, at a time when men began to think of nothing but personal interest, he was extremely capable of availing himself of irony and reasoning, when he thought them suitable. I quote the following example among many.

"I will venture to say, that the political hierarchy established by the National Assembly seemed to require, more than any other social institution, the efficacious intervention of the king. That august mediation was perhaps alone capable of keeping up a distance between so many powers which press on each other, between so many individuals elected on similar grounds, between so many dignitaries, equal by their original profession, and still so near each

other from the nature of their functions and the uncertain tenure of their places. It alone could give a certain life to the abstract and entirely constitutional gradations which ought henceforth to form the scale of subordination.

" I can clearly perceive

" Primary assemblies nominating an electoral body;

" That electoral body choosing deputies to the National Assembly;

" That assembly passing decrees and calling on the King to sanction and promulgate them;

" The King addressing these decrees to the departments;

" The departments transmitting them to the districts;

" The districts issuing orders to the municipalities;

" The municipalities, which for the execution of these decrees require, in case of need, the assistance of the national guards;

" The national guards, whose duty it is to restrain the people;

" The people who are bound to obey.

" We perceive in this succession a numerical order with which there is no fault to be found; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten; all follow with perfect regula-

rity. But in the case of government, in the case of obedience, it is by the connexion, it is by the moral relation of the different authorities that the general order is maintained. A legislator would have too easy a task, if, to accomplish the grand political work of the submission of the mass to the wisdom of a few, it were enough for him to conjugate the verb to command, and to say like a school boy, 'I will command, thou shalt command, he shall command, we shall command, &c.' It is necessary, in order to establish effective subordination, and to ensure the play of all the upward and downward movements, that there should be among all the admitted superiorities a proportional gradation of reputation and respect. There must be from rank to rank a distinction which has an imposing effect, and at the summit of these gradations, there must be a power, which, by a mixture of reality and imagination, influences by its action the whole of the political hierarchy.

"In no country are the distinctions of government more effaced than under the despotic sway of the Caliphs of the East; but no where are the punishments more hasty, more severe, or more multiform. The heads of the judicial order, and of the administration, have there a

decoration which suffices for every thing—a train of janizaries, mutes, and executioners."

These latter paragraphs bear reference to the necessity of an aristocratic body, that is, of a chamber of peers to support a monarchy.

During his last ministry, M. Necker had defended the principles of the English constitution successively against the King, the nobility, and the representatives of the people, according as each of these authorities had become the strongest. He continued the same course as a writer; and he combated in his works the Constituent Assembly, the Convention, the Directory, and Bonaparte, all four, when at the height of their prosperity; opposing to all the same principles, and apprizing them that they were sowing the seeds of their own overthrow, even when succeeding in a present object; because, in political matters, that which most misleads bodies and individuals, is the triumph which can be momentarily obtained over justice; a triumph which always ends by overturning those who obtain it.

M. Necker, who viewed the constitution of 1791 with a statesman's eye, published his opinion on that subject under the first Assembly, at a time when that constitution still gave rise to a great deal of enthusiasm. His work en-

titled "On the Executive Power in great Countries," is admitted by reflecting readers to be a standard book. It contains ideas altogether new on the strength necessary to government in general; but these reflections are at first applied specifically to the order of things recently proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly; in this book, still more than in the former, one might take predictions for history, so precise and clear is the detail of the events which must necessarily arise from the defects of the institutions in question. M. Necker, on comparing the English constitution with the work of the Constituent Assembly, ends by these remarkable words: "The French will regret, when too late, their not having shown more respect to experience, and their having failed to recognize its noble origin though concealed under garments worn and rent."

He foretold in the same book the terror that was about to arise from the power of the Jacobins; and, what is still more remarkable, the terror that would be produced after them by the establishment of military despotism.

Such a political writer as M. Necker was not to be satisfied with merely exhibiting a picture of all the misfortunes that would result from the constitution of 1791: he also gave the

Legislative Assembly advice on the means of escaping them. The Constituent Assembly had decreed more than three hundred articles, which no succeeding legislature had a right to touch, except on conditions which it was almost impossible to fulfil; and yet, among these unchangeable articles, was the method adopted for nominating to inferior appointments, and other things of equally little importance; "so that it would be neither more easy nor less difficult to change the French monarchy into a republic, than to modify the most insignificant of all the details comprised, one knows not why, in the Act of Constitution."

"It seems to me," says M. Necker elsewhere, "that in a great State we cannot expect liberty, and renounce at any time the following conditions.

"1. Conferring exclusively the right of legislation on the national representatives under the sanction of the monarch; comprising in this right of legislation, without exception, the choice and enactment of taxes.

"2. Fixing public expenditure by the same authority; with this right is evidently connected the limitation of the military force.

"3. Rendering all accounts of receipt and

expenditure to commissioners from among the national representatives.

" 4. The annual renewal of the powers necessary to levy taxes, excepting the taxes mortgaged for the payment of the interest of the public debt.

" 5. The proscription of every kind of arbitrary authority; and vesting in every citizen a right to bring a civil or criminal action against all public officers who should have made an abuse of their power in regard to him.

" 6. Prohibiting military officers to act in the interior of the kingdom, otherwise than on the demand of civil officers.

" 7. The annual renewal by the legislature of the laws which constitute the discipline, and consequently the action and strength, of an army.

" 8. The liberty of the press, extended as far as is compatible with morality and public tranquillity.

" 9. An equal distribution of public trusts, and the fitness, in the eye of the law, of all citizens to exercise public functions.

" 10. The responsibility of ministers, and of the principal agents of government.

" 11. The hereditary succession to the throne,

in order to prevent factions and preserve public tranquillity.

" 12. Conferring the executive power, fully and unreservedly, on the monarch, with all the means necessary for its exercise, that public order may be assured, and that the various powers united in the legislative body may be prevented from introducing a despotism not less oppressive than any other.

" To these principles should be added the most unqualified respect for the rights of property, did not that respect compose one of the elements of universal morality, whatever be the form of government under which men live together.

" The twelve articles, which I have just pointed out, offer to all enlightened men the fundamental bases of the civil and political liberty of a nation. They ought, accordingly, to have been placed separately in the Act of Constitution, and not have been confounded with the numerous provisions which the Assembly was willing to submit to a continual renewal of discussion.

" And why was not this done? Because, in assigning to these articles a conspicuous place in the constitutional charter, a light would have

been cast on two truths which it was intended to keep in the back ground.

"The one, that the fundamental principles of the liberty of France were completely stated, either in the text, or in the spirit of the declaration made by the King on the 27th December, 1788, and in his subsequent explanations.

"The other, that all the orders of the state, all classes of citizens, after a certain time of wavering and agitation, would have, in all probability, concurred in giving their consent to the same principles, and would perhaps still give it, were they called on to do so."

These articles, which constitute in a manner the "gospel of society," we have seen reappear, under a form nearly similar, in the declaration of the 2d May (1814), by his Majesty, dated at St. Ouen; they re-appeared also on another occasion, of which we shall speak hereafter. From the 27th December, 1788, to the 8th July, 1815, these articles are what the French wished, whenever they had the power of expressing a wish.

The book "on the executive power in great countries" is the best guide that can be followed by men called on to make or to modify a constitution of any kind; for it may be called

the political chart, in which all the dangers that are found in the track of liberty are pointed out.

In the beginning of this work M. Necker addresses himself thus to the French nation:

"I remember the time when, on publishing the result of my long reflections on the finances of France, I wrote these words: 'Yes, generous nation, it is to you that I consecrate this work.' Alas! who would have told me that, after the lapse of so small a number of years, there would come a time when I could no longer make use of the same expressions, and when I should have to turn my eyes towards other nations to regain courage to speak of justice and morality! Ah! why am I not permitted to say to-day: it is to you that I address this work, to you, nation, still more generous since liberty has called forth your native qualities and freed them from restraint; to you, nation, still more generous since your forehead no longer bears the impression of a yoke; to you, nation, still more generous since you have made trial of your strength, and that you dictate, yourself, the laws that you obey!—Ah! with what pleasure I should have held this language! my feelings still exist, but they seem to me in exile; and, in my sad regret, I cannot either contract

new ties, nor resume, even in hope, the favourite idea, and the only passion which so long filled my soul."

I do not know, but it seems to me that never was a juster expression given to that which we all feel: that love for France, which is at present so painful, while formerly there was not a nobler nor sweeter enjoyment.

CHAPTER III.

Of the different Parties which composed the Legislative Assembly.

WE cannot help feeling a sentiment of profound grief, on retracing the eras of a Revolution, in which a free constitution might have been established in France, and on seeing not only that hope overturned, but the most distressing events taking the place of the most salutary institutions. It is not a mere recollection that we recall; it is a keen sensation of pain which revives.

The Constituent Assembly repented, towards the end of its reign, that it should have allowed itself to be borne along by popular factions. It had grown old in two years, as much as Louis XIV. in forty. It was from just apprehension, in its case also, that moderation had resumed a certain sway. But its successors came forward with the fever of the Revolution, at a time when there was nothing more to reform or destroy. The social edifice was leaning to the democratic side, and, to restore it to an

upright form, it was necessary to increase the power of the throne. Yet the first decree of the Legislative Assembly was to refuse the King the title of Majesty, and to assign him an arm-chair only (*fauteuil*), similar in all respects to that of a president. The representatives of the people thus put on the appearance of thinking that they had a king, not for the public good, but for the sake of pleasing himself, and that it was consequently well to retrench that pleasure as much as possible. The decree respecting the arm-chair was recalled, so many complaints did it excite among men of sense; but the blow was struck, as well on the mind of the King as on that of the people; the one felt that his position was not tenable, the other conceived the desire and the hope of a republic.

Three parties, perfectly distinct, made themselves conspicuous in the assembly: the constitutionalists, the Jacobins, and the republicans. There were no priests, and almost no noblemen, among the constitutionalists; the cause of the privileged orders was by this time lost, but that of the throne was still under dispute, and the men of property and moderation formed a preserving party in the midst of the popular storm.

Ramond, Matthieu Dumas, Jaucourt, Beugnot, Girardin, were conspicuous among the

constitutionalists: they possessed courage, reason, perseverance, and could not be accused of any aristocratic prejudices. Accordingly, the struggle which they supported in favour of monarchy does infinite honour to their political conduct. The same Jacobin party, which existed in the Constituent Assembly under the name of The Mountain, showed itself anew in the Legislative Assembly; but it was still less entitled to esteem than its predecessor. For in the Constituent Assembly there was reason to fear, at least during certain moments, that the cause of liberty was not the strongest, and that the partisans of the old regime, who acted as deputies, might still be formidable; but in the Legislative Assembly there was neither danger nor obstacle, and the factious were obliged to create phantoms, that they might display their skill in wielding the weapons of argument.

A singular trio, Merlin de Thionville, Bazire, and Chabot, formerly a capuchin, made themselves conspicuous among the Jacobins; they were their leaders, merely because, being placed in every respect in the lowest rank, they excited no envy. It was a principle with this party, which shook society to its base, to put, at the head of the assailants, persons possessing nothing in the edifice which they meant to over-

throw. One of the first proposals made in the Assembly by the trio of demagogues was to suppress the appellation of "honourable member," which was introduced into use, as in England: aware, doubtless, that this epithet, when addressed to any one of them, could not fail to pass for ironical.

A second party, though of merits altogether different, added strength to these ignorant men, and flattered themselves, most erroneously, with being able, first to make use of the Jacobins, and afterwards to keep them within bounds. The deputies from the Gironde were composed of about twenty lawyers, from Bourdeaux and other parts of the South. These men, elected almost by accident, were gifted with the greatest talents, so rich is France in those men distinguished but unknown, whom a representative government calls forth. The Girondists aimed at a republic, and succeeded only in overturning monarchy; they perished soon after, when endeavouring to save France and its King. This made M. de Lally say, with his accustomed eloquence, "That their life and their death were equally disastrous to the country."

To these deputies of the Gironde were joined Brissot, a writer irregular in his principles as in

his style, and Condorcet, whose towering knowledge could not be disputed, but who, in a political sense, acted a greater part by his passion than by the powers of his mind. He was irreligious in the same way as priests are bigoted, with hatred, pertinacity, and the appearance of moderation: his death too resembled martyrdom.

To give a preference to a republic over every other form of government, cannot be deemed criminal, if crimes are not necessary to establish it; but at the time the Legislative Assembly declared itself inimical to the remnant of royalty that still subsisted in France, the truly republican sentiments, that is, generosity towards the weak, a horror of arbitrary measures, a respect for justice, all the virtues in short which the friends of liberty account an honour, prompted men to take an interest in the constitutional monarchy, and its head. At another period, they might have rallied, under the cause of a republic, had that form been practicable in France; but when Louis XVI. was still alive, when the nation had received his oath, and when it, in return, had taken oaths to him in perfect freedom, when the political ascendency of the privileged orders was entirely extinguished, what confidence was it necessary to have in the future,

to risk, for the sake of a name, all the real advantages already possessed!

The desire of power in the republicans of 1792 was mixed with an enthusiasm for principles, and some of them offered to support royalty, if all the places in the ministry were given to their friends. In that case only, they said, shall we be sure that the opinions of the patriots will be triumphant. The choice of ministers in a constitutional monarchy is, doubtless, an affair of the highest importance, and the King frequently committed the fault of nominating persons that were very suspicious to the partizans of liberty: however, it was then but too easy to obtain their removal, and the responsibility for political events must rest, in all its weight, on the Legislative Assembly. No argument, no source of disquietude, was listened to by its leaders; to the observations of prudence, of disinterested prudence, they replied by a disdainful smile, indicative of that emptiness which results from vanity. Repeated efforts were made to recall to them circumstances, and to deduce general views from the past: transitions were made from theory to experience, and from experience to theory, to show them the identity of the two: yet, if they consented to reply, it was by denying the most

authentic facts, and contesting the most evident observations, opposing to them a few maxims that were common, although expressed in eloquent language. They looked round among themselves as if they alone had been worthy of understanding each other, and took fresh courage from the idea that all that opposed their manner of thinking was pusillanimity. These are the tokens of party spirit among Frenchmen: disdain for their adversaries forms its basis, and disdain is always adverse to the knowledge of truth. The Girondists despised the constitutionalists until they had, without intending it, made popularity descend, and fix itself in the lowest ranks of society: they then saw the reproach of weakness cast on them in their turn by ferocious characters; the throne which they were attacking served them as a shelter, and it was not till after they had triumphed over it, that they found themselves unprotected by the people. In a revolution, men have often more to dread from their success than from their failure.

CHAPTER IV.

Spirit of the Decrees of the Legislative Assembly.

THE Constituent Assembly had passed more laws in two years than the English parliament in fifty; but these laws at least reformed abuses, and were founded on general principles. The Legislative Assembly passed an equal number of decrees, although there remained nothing truly useful to be done; but the spirit of faction inspired all to which the Assembly gave the name of laws. It accused the King's brothers, confiscated the property of emigrants, and adopted against the priests a decree of proscription revolting in a still higher degree to the friends of liberty than to the sincere Catholics, so contrary was it to philosophy and equity. What! will it be said, were not the emigrants and priests enemies to the revolution? This was a very good plea for not returning such men as deputies, for not calling them to the management of public business; but what would

society become, if, instead of seeking support in immutable principles, men should have the power of pointing laws against their adversaries as they can point a battery? The Constituent Assembly never persecuted either individuals or classes; but the next Assembly only passed decrees suited to the moment, and we can hardly quote a resolution adopted by it, which was calculated to last beyond the temporary occasion that called it forth.

Arbitrary power, against which the revolution ought to have been directed, had acquired new strength by the revolution itself. It was in vain that they pretended to do every thing for the people; the revolutionists were now only priests of a Moloch, called the common interest, which required the sacrifice of the happiness of each. Persecution in politics leads to nothing but the necessity of further persecution; and to kill is not to extirpate. It has been said with the most cold-blooded intention, that the dead alone return no more; but even that maxim is not true, for the children and the friends of the victims are stronger by their resentments, than those who suffered were by their opinions. The object should be to extinguish hatreds, and not to compress them. A

reformation is sufficiently established in a country when its adversaries have lost their interest with the public; it is not necessary they should become victims.

CHAPTER V.

Of the First War between France and Europe.

WE need not be surprised that kings and princes never liked the principles of the French Revolution. "To be a royalist is my business," said Joseph II. But as the opinion of the people always makes its way into the cabinet of kings, no sovereign in Europe thought of making war on France to oppose the revolution at its outset, when the object was only to establish a limited monarchy. The progress of knowledge was such in every part of the civilized world, that, at that time, as at present, a representative government, more or less similar to that of England, appeared suitable and just, and that system met with no formidable opponents among either the English or Germans. Burke, from the year 1791, expressed his indignation at the crimes already committed in France, and at the false systems of policy adopted there; but those of the aristocratic party, on the Continent, who now quote Burke as the enemy of the revolution, are perhaps not aware

that in every page he reproaches the French with not having conformed to the principles of the English constitution.

"I recommend to the French," he says, "our constitution; all our happiness arises from it." "Absolute democracy," he adds in another place,* "is no more a legitimate government than absolute monarchy. There is but one opinion in France against absolute monarchy;† it was at its close, it was expiring without agony, and without convulsions; all the dissensions arose from the quarrel between a despotic democracy, and a government with a balance of power."

If the majority of Europe in 1789 approved the establishment of a limited monarchy in France, how then, it may be asked, does it happen that, from the year 1791, all provocations arose from foreign powers? For although France made a hasty declaration of war against Austria in 1792, the foreign powers were, in fact, the first to assume a hostile attitude towards the French, by the convention of Pilnitz, and the assemblages at Coblentz. The reciprocal recriminations go back to that period. Yet the public opinion of Europe, and the prudence of Austria, would have prevented war, had the Legislative Assem-

* Burke's Works, vol. iii. p. 179. † Ibid. p. 183.

bly been moderate. The greatest precision in the knowledge of dates is necessary to judge with impartiality which of the two, France or Europe, was the aggressor. A lapse of six months makes that proper in politics, which was not so six months before, and people often confound ideas because they confound dates.

The foreign powers did wrong in 1791, in allowing themselves to be drawn into the imprudent measures urged by the emigrants. But after the 10th August, 1792, when the throne was overturned, the state of things in France became wholly incompatible with social order. Yet, would not this throne have stood, had not Europe threatened France with interfering by force of arms in her domestic concerns, and revolted the pride of an independent nation, by imposing laws on it? Fate alone possesses the secret of such suppositions: one thing is indisputable; it is that the convention of Pilnitz was the beginning of the long war of Europe. The Jacobins were as desirous of this war as the emigrants: for both believed that a crisis of some kind or other could alone produce the chances necessary to enable them to triumph.

In the beginning of 1792, before the declaration of war, Leopold, Emperor of Germany, one of the most enlightened princes of which

the eighteenth century can boast, wrote to the Legislative Assembly a letter, which might be almost called familiar and confidential. Some deputies of the Constituent Assembly, as Barnave and Duport, had composed it, and the draught of it was sent by the Queen to Brussels, to the Count de Mercy-Argenteau, who had long been Austrian Ambassador at Paris. In this letter Leopold attacked the Jacobin party by name, and offered his aid to the constitutionalists. His observations were, no doubt, extremely wise; but it was not thought becoming on the part of an emperor of Germany to enter with so much detail into the affairs of France; and the minds of the deputies revolted against the advice given them by a foreign monarch. Leopold had governed Tuscany with perfect moderation, and it is but justice to add, that he always showed respect to public opinion, and to the advanced knowledge of the age. He was thus a sincere believer in the good that his advice might produce. But in political discussions, where the mass of a nation takes a part, it is only the voice of events that is listened to; arguments but excite the wish of answering them.

The Legislative Assembly, which foresaw a rupture ready to break out, felt also that the

King could hardly take an interest in the success of Frenchmen fighting in the cause of the Revolution. The Assembly was distrustful of ministers, under the persuasion that they did not in their hearts wish to repel those enemies, whose assistance they secretly invoked. The war department was entrusted in the end of 1791 to M. de Narbonne, who afterwards lost his life at the siege of Torgau. He employed himself with unfeigned zeal in all the preparations necessary for the defence of the kingdom. Possessing rank and talents, the manners of a court, and the views of a philosopher, that which was predominant in his soul was military honour and French valour. To oppose the interference of foreigners under whatever circumstances, always seemed to him the duty of a citizen and a gentleman. His colleagues combined against him, and succeeded in obtaining his removal. They seized the moment when his popularity in the Assembly was lessened, to get rid of a man who was then performing his functions of minister at war, as conscientiously as he would have done under any other circumstances.

One evening, M. de Narbonne, in giving the Assembly an account of certain matters in his department, made use of this expression:

"I appeal to the most distinguished members of this Assembly." At that moment the whole party of the Mountain rose up in a fury, and Merlin, Bazire, and Chabot, declared that "all the deputies were equally distinguished." Aristocracy of talent was as repugnant to their feelings as aristocracy of birth.

The day after this check, the other ministers, no longer afraid of the ascendency of M. de Narbonne with the popular party, prevailed on the King to remove him. This ill-judged triumph was of short duration. The republicans forced the King to take ministers devoted to them, and these ministers obliged him to make use of the *initiative* given him by the constitution, by going in person to the Assembly to recommend war with Austria. I was present at the sitting in which Louis XVI. was forced to a measure which was necessarily painful to him in so many ways. His features were not expressive of his thoughts, but it was not from dissimulation that he concealed them; a mixture of resignation and dignity repressed in him every outward sign of his sentiments. On entering the Assembly he looked to the right and the left, with that kind of vacant curiosity which is usual to persons who are so short-sighted that their eyes seem to be of no use to them. He

proposed war in the same tone of voice as he might have used in requiring the most indifferent decree possible. The president replied to him with the laconic arrogance adopted in this Assembly, as if the dignity of a free people consisted in insulting the King whom it had chosen for its constitutional chief.

When Louis XVI. and his ministers had left the hall, the Assembly voted war by acclamation. Some members took no share in the deliberations; but the galleries applauded with transport: the deputies threw their hats in the air, and that day, the first of the sanguinary struggle which has distracted Europe during twenty-three years, that day did not, in most minds, produce the slightest disquietude. Yet, of the deputies who voted for this war, many fell by a violent death, and those who rejoiced at it the most were unconsciously pronouncing their own doom.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Means employed in 1792 *to establish the Republic.*

THE French are but little disposed to civil war, and have no talent whatever for conspiracies. They are little disposed to civil war, because, among them, the majority almost always draws the minority after it; the party that passes for the stronger soon becomes all-powerful, for every one joins it. They have no talent for conspiracies, for the same reasons which make them extremely fitted for revolutionary movements; they stand in need of mutual excitement by a communication of their ideas; the profound silence, the solitary resolution, necessary for a conspirator, does not enter into their character. They might, perhaps, be more capable of this, now that Italian features are blended with their natural disposition; but we see no example of a conspiracy in the history of France; Henry III. and Henry IV. were each assassinated by fanatics without accomplices. The Court, it is true, under Charles IX. prepared in darkness the massacre

of St. Bartholomew; but it was an Italian queen, who communicated her artful and dissembling spirit to the instruments of which she made use. The means employed to accomplish the Revolution were not better than those generally used to form a conspiracy: in fact, to commit a crime in a public square, or to contrive it in the closet, is to be equally guilty, but there is the perfidy the less.

The Legislative Assembly overthrew monarchy by means of sophistry. Its decrees perverted the good sense and depraved the morality of the nation. A kind of political hypocrisy, still more dangerous than hypocrisy in religion, was necessary to destroy the throne, piece-meal, while swearing to maintain it. To-day the ministers were accused; to-morrow the King's guard was disbanded; on another day rewards were granted to the soldiers of the regiment of Chateauvieux, who had mutinied against their officers; the massacres of Avignon found defenders in the heart of the Assembly; in short, whether the establishment of a republic in France appeared desirable or not, there could be but one opinion on the choice of the means employed to attain it; and the more one felt attached to liberty, the more did the

conduct of the republican party excite indignation in the bottom of the soul.

That which, in a great political crisis, ought, above all things, to be considered, is, whether the Revolution desired is in harmony with the spirit of the time. By endeavouring to accomplish the reinstatement of ancient institutions; that is, by endeavouring to make the human mind retrograde, all the popular passions become inflamed. But if, on the other hand, it be attempted to found a republic in a country, which the day before had all the defects and all the vices to which absolute monarchies must give birth, men are obliged to exercise oppression in order to acquire freedom, and to sully themselves with crimes in proclaiming that government whose basis is virtue. A sure method of never mistaking the wish of the majority of a nation, is never to follow any other than a lawful course, for the attainment even of those objects which are thought most useful. So long as we allow ourselves to do nothing immoral, we are sure of never violently thwarting the course of things.

The war afterwards so brilliant to the French, was ushered in by defeats. The soldiers at Lisle, after being routed, put to death their commander, Theobald Dillon, whose fidelity

they, most unjustly, suspected. These early checks had diffused a general spirit of mistrust. Accordingly the Legislative Assembly pursued the ministers with incessant denunciations, like restive horses, who cannot be spurred forward. The first duty of a government, as well as of a nation, is doubtless to ensure its independence against the invasion of foreigners. But could so false a situation continue? And was it not better to open the gates of France to the King, when desirous of quitting the country, than to act in the spirit of chicane, from morning to night, with the royal power, or rather the royal weakness; and to treat the descendant of St. Louis, when captive on the throne, like a bird fastened to the top of a tree, and against which every one in his turn, aims a dart.

The Legislative Assembly, weary even of the patience of Louis XVI., determined to present to him two decrees, to which his conscience and his safety would not allow him to affix his sanction. By the first, they sentenced to transportation every priest who had refused the constitutional oath, if he were denounced by twenty active citizens, that is, citizens who paid taxes; and by the second, they called to Paris a legion of Marseillois, whom they knew to be determined to act the part of conspirators against the crown.

But what a decree was that of which the priests were the victims! The fate of a citizen was surrendered to a denunciation which proceeded on his presumed opinions. What is there to be feared from despotism but such a decree as this? Instead of twenty active citizens, we have only to suppose courtiers, who are active also in their manner; and we shall have the history of all the *lettres de cachet,* of all the exiles, of all the imprisonments, which people wish to prevent by the establishment of a free government.

A generous impulse of the soul determined the King to expose himself to every hazard rather than accede to the proscription of the priests. He might, by considering himself as a prisoner, give his sanction to this law, and protest in private against it; but he could not consent to act in religion as in politics; and if, as king, he dissembled, as a martyr he was true.

As soon as the *veto* of the King became known, intelligence came from all quarters that a tumult was preparing in the suburbs of Paris. The people, having become despotic, were irritated by the slightest obstacle to their will. We saw on this occasion too the dreadful inconvenience of placing the royal authority against a single house of legislation. The conflict between

these two powers has, in such a case, no arbiter, and the appeal is made to insurrection. Twenty thousand men of the lowest rank, armed with pikes and lances, marched to the Tuileries without knowing why; they were ready to commit every crime, or could be persuaded to the noblest actions, according to the impulse of events, and of their leaders. These twenty thousand men made their way into the palace; their faces bore marks of that coarseness, both of feature and mind, of which the disgusting effect is not to be supported by the greatest philanthropist. Had they been animated by any true feeling, had they come to complain against injustice, against the dearness of corn, against the increase of taxes, against compulsory service in the army, in short, against any suffering which power and wealth can inflict on poverty, the rags which they wore, their hands blackened by labour, the premature old age of the women, the brutishness of the children, would all have excited pity. But their frightful oaths mingled with cries, their threatening gestures, their deadly instruments, exhibited a frightful spectacle, and one calculated to impair for ever the respect that ought to be felt for our fellow-creatures.

All Europe knows how Madame Elizabeth,

the King's sister, endeavoured to prevent those around her from undeceiving the madmen who took her for the Queen, and threatened her under that name. The Queen herself ought to have been recognized by the ardour with which she pressed her children to her breast. The King on this day showed all the virtues of a saint. The time was past for saving himself like a hero; the dreadful signal of massacre, the red cap was placed on his devoted head; but nothing could humiliate him, for all his life had been a continued sacrifice.

The Assembly, ashamed of its auxiliaries, sent several of the deputies to save the royal family, and Vergniaud, perhaps the most eloquent orator of those who have appeared at the French tribune, succeeded in dispersing the populace in a few moments.

General la Fayette, indignant at what was passing at Paris, left his army to appear at the bar of the Assembly, and demand justice for the terrible day of 20th June, 1792. Had the Girondists at that time joined him and his friends, they might perhaps still have prevented the entrance of foreign troops, and restored to the King that constitutional authority which was his due. But at the instant that M. de la Fayette closed his speech by the words which

so well became him, " Such are the representations submitted to the Assembly by a citizen, whose love for liberty, at least, will not be disputed;" Guadet, the colleague of Vergniaud, stepped quickly to the tribune, and made a dexterous use of the distrust that every representative assembly naturally feels towards a general who interferes in domestic affairs. However, when he revived the recollection of Cromwell dictating, in the name of his army, laws to the representatives of his country, the Assembly were perfectly aware that they had neither tyrant nor soldier before them, but a virtuous citizen, who, although friendly to the republican form in theory, could not tolerate crime, under whatever banner it might pretend to range itself.

CHAPTER VII.

Anniversary of 14th July celebrated in 1792.

ADDRESSES from every part of France, which at that time were sincere, because there was danger in signing them, expressed the wish of the great majority of the citizens for the support of the constitution. However imperfect it might be, it was a limited monarchy, and such has, all along, been the wish of the French: the factious, or the military, have alone been able to prevent that wish from prevailing. Could the leaders of the popular party have believed that the nation was really desirous of the republican form, they would not have had occasion to resort to the most unjust methods to establish it. Despotic measures are never resorted to when public opinion is in favour of a plan; and what despotic measures, good heaven! were those which were then seen to proceed from the coarsest ranks of society, like vapours arising from a pestilential marsh! Marat, whose name posterity will perhaps recall, on purpose to connect with a man the crimes of an era, Marat

made use every day of his newspaper to threaten the royal family, and its defenders, with the most dreadful punishments. Never had human speech been so much disfigured; the howlings of wild beasts might be expressed in such language.

Paris was divided into forty-eight sections, all of which used to send deputies to the bar of the Assembly, to denounce the slightest actions as crimes. Forty-four thousand municipalities contained each a club of Jacobins in correspondence with that of Paris, and that again was subservient to the orders of the suburbs. Never was a city of seven hundred thousand souls so completely transformed. On all hands were heard invectives directed against the royal palace; nothing now defended it but a kind of respect which still served as a barrier around that ancient abode; but that barrier might at any moment be passed, and then all was lost.

They wrote from the departments that the most violent men were being sent to Paris, to celebrate the 14th July, and that they went there only to massacre the King and Queen. The mayor of Paris, Pethion, a cold-blooded fanatic, who pushed all new ideas to an extreme, because he was more capable of exaggerating than of comprehending them; Pethion, with an exterior silliness which was taken for sincerity,

was the favourer of every kind of sedition. The authority of the magistracy was thus added to the cause of insurrection. The departmental administration, by virtue of an article in the constitution, suspended Pethion from his funcions; the King's ministers confirmed the suspension; but the Assembly re-instated the mayor in his office, and his ascendency was increased by his momentary disgrace. A popular chief can desire nothing more than an apparent persecution, followed by a real triumph.

The *Marseillois*, sent to the *Champ de Mars* to celebrate the 14th of July, bore, on their tattered hats, the inscription, "*Pethion or death!*" They passed before the raised seats on which the royal family were placed, calling out, *Vive Pethion!* a miserable name, which even the mischief that he did has not been able to redeem from obscurity! A few feeble voices could with difficulty be heard, when calling *Vive le Roi!* as a last adieu, a final prayer.

The expression of the Queen's countenance will never be effaced from my remembrance: her eyes were swollen with tears; the splendour of her dress, the dignity of her deportment, formed a contrast with the train that surrounded her. Only a few national guards separated her from the populace; the armed men, assembled

in the *Champ de Mars*, seemed collected rather for a tumult than a *fête*. The King repaired on foot from the pavilion, under which he sat, all the way to the altar, raised at the end of the *Champ de Mars*. It was there that he had to take, a second time, an oath of fidelity to the constitution, of which the relics were about to crush the throne. A crowd of children followed the King with acclamations—children as yet unconscious of the crime with which their fathers were about to sully themselves.

It required the character of Louis XVI. that character of martyr which he ever upheld, to support as he did such a situation. His mode of walking, his countenance, had something remarkable in them: on other occasions one might have wished for more grandeur in his deportment; on the present, to remain in every respect the same was enough to appear sublime. I marked at a distance his head, distinguished by its powder from the black locks of those that accompanied him; his dress, still embroidered as before, was more conspicuous when close to the coarse attire of the lower orders, who pressed around him. When he mounted the steps of the altar, he seemed a sacred victim offering himself as a voluntary sacrifice. He descended; and, crossing anew the disordered

ranks, returned to take his place beside the Queen and his children. After that day the people saw him no more till they saw him on the scaffold.

CHAPTER VIII.

Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick.

IT has been strongly asserted that the terms in which the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick was expressed, were one of the principal causes of the rising of the French nation against the allies in 1792. I do not believe this: the first two articles of that manifesto contained what most papers of the kind since the Revolution have expressed; that is, that the foreign powers would make no conquest from France, and that they were not inclined to interfere with the interior government of the country. To these two promises, which are seldom observed, was added, it is true, the threat of treating as rebels such of the national guards as should be found with arms in their hands; as if, in any case, a nation could be culpable in defending its territory! But had the manifesto even been more moderately couched, it would not, at that time, have at all weakened the public spirit of the French. It is well known

that every armed power is desirous of victory, and has nothing more at heart than to weaken the obstacles which it must encounter to obtain it. Accordingly, the proclamations of invaders addressed to the nations whom they attack, all consist in saying; "Do not resist us;" and the answer of a spirited people should be; "We will resist you."

The friends of liberty were on this occasion, as they always will be, adverse to foreign interference; but they could not, on the other hand, conceal from themselves that the King had been put in a situation that reduced him to wish for the aid of the allies. What resource could there then remain to virtuous patriots?

M. de la Fayette proposed to the royal family to come and take refuge at Compeigne, with his army. This was the best and safest course; but the persons who possessed the confidence of the King and Queen hated M. de la Fayette as much as if he had been an outrageous Jacobin. The aristocrats of that time preferred running every risk to obtain the re-establishment of the old government, to the acceptance of efficient aid under the condition of adopting with sincerity the principles of the Revolution, that is, a representative government. The offer of M. de la Fayette was then refused, and the King

submitted to the dreadful risk of awaiting the German troops at Paris.

The royalists, who are subject to all the imprudence of hope, persuaded themselves that the defeats of the French armies would produce so much fear among the people of Paris, as to render them mild and submissive, whenever such intelligence reached their ears. The great error of men impassioned in politics consists in attributing all kinds of vices and meanness to their adversaries. It is incumbent on us to know how to value, in certain respects, those whom we hate, and those even whom we despise; for no man, and, still more, no mass of men, ever forfeited entirely all moral feeling. These furious Jacobins, capable at that time of every crime, were, however, possessed of energy; and it was by means of that energy that they triumphed over so many foreign armies.

CHAPTER IX.

Revolution of the 10th of August, 1792— Overthrow of the Monarchy.

PUBLIC opinion never fails to manifest itself, even in the midst of the factions by which it is oppressed. One revolution only, that of 1789, was accomplished by the force of this opinion; but since that epoch, scarcely any crisis which has taken place in France has been desired by the nation.

Four days before the 10th of August, a decree of accusation was attempted to be carried in the Assembly against M. de la Fayette; he was acquitted by four hundred and twenty-four votes out of six hundred and seventy. The wish of this majority was certainly against the revolution. The forfeiture of the crown by the King (*déchéance du roi*) was demanded; the Assembly rejected it, but the minority, who were determined to obtain it, had recourse to the people for that purpose.

The constitutional party was, nevertheless, the most numerous; and if, on one hand the

nobles had not left France, and, on the other, the royalists who surrounded the King had cordially reconciled themselves to the friends of liberty, France and the throne might yet have been saved. It is not the first, nor will it be the last time that we shall be called upon to show in the course of this work, that no real good can take place in France, but by a sincere reconciliation between the royalists of the old *regime*, and the constitutional royalists. But in the word *sincere*, how many ideas are contained!

The constitutionalists had in vain sought leave to enter the palace of the King in order to defend him. They were prevented by the invincible prejudices of the courtiers. Incapable, however, notwithstanding the refusal they underwent, of joining the opposite party, they wandered around the palace, exposing themselves to be massacred, as a consolation for not being allowed to fight. Of this number were MM. de Lally, Narbonne, La Tour-du-Pin, Gouverner Castellane, Montmorency, and several others, whose names have re-appeared on the most honourable occasions.

Before midnight on the 9th of August, the forty-eight alarm bells of the sections of Paris began to toll, and this monotonous, mournful,

and rapid sound did not cease one moment during the whole night. I was at my window with some of my friends, and every quarter of an hour the voluntary patrole of the constitutionalists sent us news. We were told that the *Fauxbourgs* were advancing, headed by Santerre, the brewer, and Westermann, an officer, who afterwards fought against the Vendeans. No one could foresee what would happen on the morrow, and no one expected to live beyond a day. We had, nevertheless, some moments of hope during this horrible night; we flattered ourselves, I know not why, perhaps only because we had exhausted our fears.

All at once, at seven o'clock, the horrible noise of the cannon of the *fauxbourgs* was heard. In the first attack, the Swiss guards had the advantage. The people fled along the streets with a terror equal to their preceding fury. The King, it must be acknowledged, ought then to have put himself at the head of his troops, and opposed his enemies. The Queen was of this opinion, and the courageous counsel she gave on this occasion does honour to her memory, and recommends her to posterity.

Several battalions of the national guards, and amongst others that of *Les Filles St. Thomas*,

were full of zeal and ardour; but the King, on quitting the Tuileries, could no longer rely on that enthusiasm which constitutes the strength of armed citizens.

Many republicans believe, that if Louis XVI. had triumphed on the 10th of August, the foreign troops would have arrived in Paris, and have re-established the ancient despotism, rendered still more odious by the means from which it would have derived its force. It is possible that things might have come to this extremity; but what would have led them to it? In civil commotions a crime may always be rendered politically useful; but it is by preceding crimes that this infernal necessity is caused.

I was told that all my friends who formed the exterior guard of the Tuileries had been seized and massacred. I went out instantly in search of tidings. My coachman was stopped on the bridge by men, who silently made signs to him that the work of death was going on upon the other side. After two hours of fruitless attempts to pass, I heard that all those, in whom I was interested, were still alive, but that most of them were obliged to conceal themselves, in order to avoid the proscription, by which they were menaced. When I went on foot to visit them that evening, in the obscure houses where they

had found an asylum, I met armed men stretched before the doors, drowsy with intoxication, or half waking only to utter horrible imprecations. Several women, among the populace, were in the same situation, and their vociferations seemed still more odious. Whenever one of the patroles appointed to keep order advanced, respectable people fled from its approach; for what was then called keeping order was only contributing to the triumph of the assassins, and removing every obstacle in their way.

CHAPTER X.

Private Anecdotes.

I CANNOT find courage to continue such pictures. Yet the 10th of August appeared to have in view the seizing the reins of government, in order to direct all its efforts against the invasion of foreigners; but the massacres which took place twenty-two days after the overthrow of the throne were only the wantonness of crime. It has been said that the terror experienced in Paris, and throughout all France, decided the French to take refuge in the camps. What a singular expedient is fear, for recruiting an army! But such a supposition is an offence to the nation, and I shall endeavour to show in the following chapter, that it was in spite of those crimes, and not by their horrible concurrence, that the French repulsed the foreigners who came to give them the law.

To criminals, succeeded criminals still more detestable. The true republicans did not remain masters one day after the 10th of August.

The moment the throne they attacked was overturned, they had to defend themselves; they had shown but too much condescension towards the horrible instruments whom they had employed to establish the republic. But the Jacobins were very sure in the end to terrify them with their own idol, by dint of crimes; and it seemed as if the wretches who were most hardened in guilt endeavoured to fit the head of Medusa on the different leaders of parties, in order to rid themselves of all who could not support its aspect.

The detail of these horrible massacres is revolting to the imagination, and furnishes nothing for reflexion. I shall, therefore, confine myself to relating what happened to me personally at this time; it is perhaps the best manner of giving an idea of it.

During the interval, from the 10th of August to the 2d of September, new arrests were every day taking place. The prisons were crowded, and all the addresses of the people, which for three years past had announced, by anticipation, what the party leaders had already decided, called for the punishment of the traitors: this appellation extended to classes as well as to individuals; to talents as well as fortune; to dress as well as opinions; in short, to every thing

which the laws protect, and which it was the intention of these men to annihilate.

The Austrian and Prussian troops had already passed the frontier, and it was repeated on all sides, that if the enemy advanced, all the well-disposed people in Paris would be massacred. Several of my friends, Messrs. de Narbonne, Montmorency, Baumets, were personally threatened, and each of them was concealed in the house of some citizen or other. But it was necessary to change their place of retreat daily, because those who gave them an asylum were alarmed. They would not at first make use of my house, being afraid that it might attract attention; but it seemed to me that being the residence of an Ambassador, and having inscribed on the door *Hôtel de Suède*, it would be respected, although M. de Staël was absent. It soon, however, became useless to deliberate, when there could be found no one who dared to receive the proscribed. Two of them came to my house, and I admitted into my confidence only one of my servants, of whom I was sure. I shut up my friends in the remotest chamber, and passed the night myself in the apartments looking towards the street, dreading every moment what was called the "domiciliary visits."

One morning, a servant, whom I distrusted,

came to tell me that the denunciation and description of M. de Narbonne, who was one of the persons concealed in my house, was stuck up at the corner of my street. I thought my servant wanted, by frightening me, to penetrate my secret; but he had simply related the fact. A short time after the formidable domiciliary visit took place in my house. M. de Narbonne, being outlawed, would have perished that very day, if discovered; and notwithstanding the precautions I had taken, I knew well, that if the search was rigorously made, he could not escape. It became then necessary, at whatever price, to prevent this search; I collected all my courage, and felt, on this occasion, that we can always conquer our emotions, however strong, when aware that they may endanger the life of another.

Commissaries of the lowest class had been sent into all the houses of Paris, to seize the proscribed; and, while they were making these visits, military posts occupied the two extremities of the street, to prevent any escape. I began by alarming these men as much as I could on the violation of the rights of nations, of which they were guilty, by searching the house of an ambassador; and, as their knowledge of geography was not extensive, I per-

suaded them that Sweden was a power which could threaten them with an immediate invasion, being situated on the frontiers of France. Twenty years after, strange to tell! my assertion became literally true; for Lubeck and Swedish Pomerania fell into the power of the French.

The common people are capable of being softened instantly, or not at all; there is scarcely any gradation in their sentiments, or in their ideas. I perceived that my reasonings made an impression on them, and I had the courage, with anguish in my heart, to jest with them on the injustice of their suspicions. Nothing is more agreeable to men of this class than a tone of pleasantry; for, even in the excess of their fury against the upper ranks, they feel a pleasure in being treated by them as equals. I led them back in this manner to the door, and thanked God for the extraordinary courage with which he had endowed me at that moment. Nevertheless, this situation could not last, and the slightest accident would have sufficed to betray an outlawed person, who was very well known on account of his having been recently in the ministry.

A generous and enlightened Hanoverian, Dr. Bollmann, who afterwards exposed himself

to deliver M. de la Fayette from the Austrian prisons, having heard of my anxieties, offered, without any other motive than the enthusiasm of goodness, to conduct M. de Narbonne to England, by giving him the passport of one of his friends. Nothing was more daring than this attempt, since, if any foreigner had been arrested, travelling with a proscribed person under a false name, he would have been condemned to death. The courage of Dr. Ballmann did not fail, either in the will or in the execution, and, four days after his departure, M. de Narbonne was in London.

I had obtained passports to go into Switzerland; but it would have been so distressing to find myself alone in safety, leaving so many friends in danger, that I delayed my departure from day to day, in order to learn what became of them. I was informed on the 31st of August, that M. de Jaucourt, a deputy to the Legislative Assembly, and M. de Lally Tollendal, had both been sent to the Abbaye; and it was already known, that those only who were destined to be massacred were sent to that prison. The fine talents of M. de Lally protected him in a singular manner. He composed the defence of one of his fellow prisoners, who was brought before the tribunal

previous to the massacre; the prisoner was acquitted, and every one knew that he owed his deliverance to the eloquence of Lally. M. de Condorcet admired his splendid abilities, and exerted himself to save him; M. de Lally also found an efficacious protection in the sympathy of the English ambassador, who was still in Paris at this date.* M. de Jaucourt had not the same support: I procured a list of all the members of the *commune* of Paris, who were then the masters of the city. I knew them only by their terrible reputation, and I sought, as chance directed, for a motive to determine my choice. I suddenly recollected, that one of them, called Manuel, was a dabbler in literature, having just published Letters of Mirabeau, with a preface, very badly written, it is true, but which showed, at the same time, an ambition to display ability. I persuaded myself that the love of applause might in some way render a man accessible to solicitation, and it was accordingly to Manuel that I wrote to ask an audience. He fixed it for the next morning at seven o'clock, at his house;

* Lady Sutherland, now Marchioness of Stafford, and then English ambassadress at Paris, showed the most devoted attentions to the royal family at that frightful period.

this was rather a democratic hour, but I certainly did not fail to be punctual. I arrived before he had got up, and waited for him in his closet, where I saw his own portrait, placed on his writing-desk, which gave me hopes that at least he might be gained over a little by vanity. He came in, and I must do him the justice to admit, that it was through his good sentiments that I succeeded in softening him.

I represented to him the terrible vicissitudes of popularity, of which examples could be cited every day. "In six months," said I, "your power may perhaps be at an end" (in less than six months he perished on the scaffold). "Save M. de Lally, and M. de Jaucourt; reserve for yourself a soothing and consoling recollection, at the moment when you also may be proscribed in your turn." Manuel was a man who could feel; he was hurried on by his passions, but capable of worthy sentiments; for it was for having defended the King that he was condemned to death. He wrote to me on the 1st of September that M. de Condorcet had obtained the liberation of M. de Lally; and that in compliance with my entreaties, he had just set M. de Jaucourt at liberty. Overjoyed at having saved the life of so estimable a man, I determined on departing the next day; but I en-

gaged to take up the Abbé de Montesquiou, who was also proscribed, when I should have passed the barriers of Paris, and to carry him to Switzerland, disguised as a servant. To make this change more easy and secure, I gave one of his attendants the passport of one of mine, and we fixed on the spot on the high road where I should find M. de Montesquiou. It was thus impossible to fail in this rendezvous, of which the hour and place were fixed, without exposing the person who was waiting for me to the suspicion of the patroles who scoured the high roads.

The news of the taking of Longwy and Verdun arrived on the morning of the 2d September. We again heard in every quarter those frightful alarm-bells, of which the sound was but too strongly engraven on my mind, by the night of the 10th of August. I was solicited to delay my departure; but could I risk the safety of a person who was then confiding in me?

My passports were perfectly in order, and I imagined that the best way would be to set out in a coach and six, with my servants in full livery. I thought that, by seeing me in great style, people would conclude I had a right to depart, and would let me pass freely. This was very ill judged, for in such moments what of all

things should be avoided is striking the imagination of the people, and the most shabby post-chaise would have conveyed me with more safety. Scarcely had my carriage advanced three steps, when, at the noise of the whips of the postilions, a swarm of old women, who seemed to issue from the infernal regions, rushed on my horses, crying that I ought to be stopped; that I was running away with the gold of the nation, that I was going to join the enemy, and a thousand other invectives still more absurd. These women gathered a crowd instantly, and some of the common people, with ferocious countenances, seized my postilions, and ordered them to conduct me to the assembly of the section of the quarter where I lived (the Fauxbourg of St. Germain). On stepping out of my carriage, I had time to whisper to the Abbé de Montesquiou's servant to go and inform his master of what had happened.

I entered this assembly, the deliberations of which bore the appearance of a permanent insurrection. The person who called himself the president, declared to me that I was denounced as having the intention of carrying away proscribed persons, and that my attendants were going to be examined. He found one person

missing, who was marked on my passport (it was the servant I had sent away), and, in consequence of this irregularity, he ordered me to be conducted to the *Hotel de Ville*, by a gend'arme. Nothing could be more terrifying than such an order; it was necessary to cross the half of Paris, and to alight on the *Place de Grêve*, opposite the *Hotel de Ville*. On the steps, leading to the staircase of that hotel, several persons had been massacred on the 10th of August. No woman had yet perished; but the next day the Princess of Lamballe was murdered by the people, whose fury was already such, that every eye seemed to demand blood.

I was three hours in going from the *Fauxbourg St. Germain* to the *Hotel de Ville*, advancing slowly through an immense crowd, who assailed me with cries of death. Their invectives were not directed against me personally, for I was then hardly known; but a fine carriage and laced clothes were, in the eyes of the people, the marks of those who ought to be massacred. Not knowing yet how inhuman men become in revolutions, I addressed myself two or three times to the *gen-d'armes*, who passed near my carriage, to implore their assistance; and was answered by the most disdainful and threatening gestures. I was pregnant; but

that did not disarm them; on the contrary their fury seemed to increase in proportion as they felt themselves culpable. The *gen-d'arme*, however, who was placed in my coach, not being stimulated by his comrades, was moved by my situation, and promised to defend me at the peril of his life. The most dangerous moment was in the *Place de Grêve*; but I had time to prepare myself for it, and the faces which surrounded me bore such an expression of atrocity, that the aversion they inspired served to give me additional courage.

I alighted from my carriage, in the midst of an armed multitude, and proceeded under an arch of pikes. In ascending the staircase, which was likewise bristled with spears, a man pointed towards me the one which he held in his hand. My *gen-d'arme* pushed it away with his sabre: if I had fallen at this moment my life was at an end; for it is in the nature of the common people to respect what still stands erect, but the victim once struck is dispatched.

I arrived at length at the *Commune*, the president of which was Robespierre, and I breathed again, because I had escaped from the populace: yet what a protector was Robespierre! Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes, performed the office of secretaries, and the latter had left

his beard untouched for a fortnight, that he might the better escape the slightest suspicion of aristocracy. The hall was crowded with common people; men, women, and children, were exclaiming, with all their might, "*Vive la nation.*" The writing office of the *Commune* being a little elevated, those who were placed there could converse together. There I was seated, and, while I was recovering myself, the Bailli of Virieu, Envoy of Parma, who had been arrested at the same time as myself, rose to declare that he did not know me; that whatever my affair might be, it had not the least connexion with his, and that we ought not to be confounded together. The want of chivalry of this poor man displeased me, and made me doubly eager to be useful to myself, since it appeared that the Bailli of Virieu was not disposed to spare me that trouble. I rose then, and stated the right I had to depart, as being the Ambassadress of Sweden, showing the passports I had obtained in consequence of this right. At this moment Manuel arrived; he was very much astonished to find me in so painful a situation, and immediately becoming responsible for me, till the *Commune* had decided on my fate, he conducted me out of that terrible

place, and locked me up with my maid-servant in his closet.

We waited there for six hours, half dead with thirst, hunger, and fright: the window of Manuel's apartment looked on the *Place de Grêve*, and we saw the assassins returning from the prisons, with their arms bare and bloody, and uttering horrible cries.

My coach with its baggage had remained in the middle of the square, and the people were proceeding to plunder it, when I perceived a tall man, in the dress of a national guard, who, ascending the coach-box, forbade the populace to take away any thing. He passed two hours in guarding my baggage, and I could not conceive how so slight a consideration could occupy him amidst such awful circumstances. In the evening this man, with Manuel, entered the room where I was confined. He was Santerre, the brewer, afterwards so notorious for his cruelty. He lived in the *Fauxbourg St. Antoine*, and had several times been both witness and distributor of the supplies of corn which my father used to provide in seasons of scarcity, and for which he retained some gratitude. Unwilling also to go, as he ought to have done in his quality of commandant, to the relief of the

prisoners, guarding my coach served him as a pretext; he wanted to make a boast of it to me, but I could not help reminding him what was his duty at such a moment. As soon as Manuel saw me, he exclaimed with great emotion, "Ah! how happy I am at having set your two friends at liberty yesterday!" He bitterly deplored the assassinations that were going on, but which even at this time he had no power to prevent. An abyss was opened behind the steps of every man who had acquired any authority, and if he receded he could not fail to sink into it.

Manuel reconducted me home at night in his carriage; he was afraid of losing his popularity by doing it in the day. The lamps were not lighted in the streets; but we met numbers of men with torches in their hands, the glare of which was more terrifying than darkness itself. Manuel was often stopped, and asked who he was, but when he answered, "*Le Procureur de la Commune*," this revolutionary dignity was respectfully recognized.

Arrived at my house, Manuel informed me that a new passport would be given to me, and that I should be allowed to depart, but with my maid-servant only. A *gen-d'arme* had orders to attend me to the frontier. The following day

Tallien, the same who, twenty months after, delivered France from Robespierre, on the 9th Thermidor, came to my house, having been ordered by the Commune to conduct me to the barrier. We heard every instant of new massacres. Several persons much exposed were then in my room: I begged of Tallien not to name them; he promised that he would not, and he kept his word. We went together in my carriage, and left each other without having the power of communicating our thoughts to each other; the circumstances in which we were froze the words on our lips.

I still met with some difficulties near Paris, which I found means to remove; and, as the distance from the capital increased, the waves of the tempest seemed to subside, and in the mountains of Jura nothing reminded me of the dreadful agitation of which Paris was the theatre. The French were every where repeating that they were determined to repulse the foreigners. I confess that I saw then no other foreigners than the bloody assassins, under whose daggers I had left my friends, the royal family, and all the worthy inhabitants of France.

CHAPTER XI.

The Foreign Troops driven from France in 1792.

THE prisoners of Orleans had shared the fate of those of Paris, the priests had been massacred at the foot of the altars, and the royal family were captives in the temple. M. de la Fayette, faithful to the constant desire of the nation, a constitutional monarchy, had quitted his army, rather than take an oath contrary to that which he had so lately sworn to the King. A National Convention was formed, and the Republic was proclaimed almost under the eyes of the victorious monarchs, whose armies were then only forty leagues from Paris: yet the greater part of the French officers had emigrated; and what remained of the troops had never seen service, and the administration was in a most deplorable state. There was a grandeur in such a resolution taken in the midst of the most imminent perils; it instantly revived in every heart the interest which the French nation once inspired; and if the conquering soldiers, on their returning to their homes, had overthrown the revolu-

tionary faction, the cause of France would have once again been gained.

General Dumourier, in this first campaign of 1792, displayed talents which can never be forgotten. He knew how to employ with ability the military force, which had its basis in patriotism, but has since been made the tool of ambition. Amidst all the horrors which disgraced the year 1792, the public spirit which then showed itself had something in it truly admirable. The citizens, now become soldiers, devoted themselves to their country; and personal interests, the love of money and of power, had as yet no share in the efforts of the French armies. Europe consequently felt a sort of respect for the unexpected resistance which she experienced. Soon, however, the madness of crime possessed the prevailing party, and every vice and even enormity succeeded:—sad amelioration for mankind!

CHAPTER XII.

Trial of Louis XVI.

WHAT a subject! But it has been so often treated on, that I shall here allow myself to make only a few particular observations.

In the month of October, 1792, before the horrible trial of the King had begun, before Louis XVI. had named his defenders, M. Necker stood forward to receive that noble and perilous charge. He published a memoir which posterity will accept as one of the truest and most disinterested testimonies that could be given in favour of the virtuous monarch thrown into captivity.* M. de Malesherbes was chosen by the King to be his advocate in the National Convention. The dreadful death of this admirable man and of his family, demands the first place in our memory; but the sound reasoning and sincere eloquence of M. Necker's publica-

* The property which M. Necker possessed in France was sequestered from the very day on which his "*Memoire justificatif de Louis XVI.*" appeared.

tion in defence of the King, must render it a document for history.

It cannot be denied that Louis XVI. was considered as a prisoner from the time of his departure for Varennes, and consequently he did nothing to forward the establishment of a Constitution, which the most sincere efforts would not perhaps have been able to maintain. But with what delicacy does not M. Necker, who always believed in the force of truth, place it before us upon this point.

" Men of attentive minds—just men, will admire the patience and moderation which the King displayed when every thing changed around him, and when he was continually exposed to every kind of insult; but, if he had committed faults, if he had misunderstood on some points the new obligations imposed upon him, should it not be attributed to the new form of government? to that constitution in which a monarch was nothing but in appearance, in which royalty itself was out of its place; in which the head of the executive power could discern neither what he was, nor what he ought to be; in which he was deceived even by words, and by the equivocal sense which might be given to them; in which he was king without any ascendency; in which he occupied the throne without enjoying any

respect, in which he appeared to possess the right to command without having the means of making himself obeyed; in which he was alternately, and according to the unrestrained will of a single deliberative assembly, at one time a simple public functionary, and at another the hereditary representative of the nation? How could a monarch, suddenly placed in the trammels of a political system equally obscure and absurd, and ultimately abolished by the deputies of the nation themselves; how could he alone be required to be consistent in the midst of the continual fluctuation of ideas? And would it not be the height of injustice to judge a monarch by all his projects, all his thoughts, in the course of a revolution so extraordinary, that it would have been necessary for him to be in perfect harmony, not only with the things which were known, but even with all those of which it would have been in vain to preconceive any just idea?"

M. Necker goes on to retrace in his Memoir the acts of beneficence which marked the reign of Louis XVI. before the revolution; the extinction of the remains of servitude, the abolition of the torture, the suppression of the *corvée*, the establishment of the provincial administrations, the convocation of the States

General. "Is it not Louis XVI." says he, "who, in occupying himself unceasingly with the improvements of the prisons and hospitals, has given the attention of a tender father and of a compassionate friend to the asylums of misery, and the retreats of misfortune or of error? Is it not he, perhaps the only one, besides St. Louis, of all the heads of the French Empire, who has given the rare example of purity of manners? Must he not besides be allowed the peculiar merit of having been religious without superstition, and scrupulous without intolerance? And is it not from him that a part of the inhabitants of France (the Protestants), persecuted during so many reigns, have received not only a legal security, but a civil station, which admits them to a participation in all the advantages of social order? These benefits belong to the past; but is the virtue of gratitude applicable only to other periods, and other portions of life?"

The want of respect shown to Louis XVI. during his trial is more striking than even his condemnation. When the President of the Convention said to him who was his King: "Louis, you may sit down!" we feel more indignation even than when he is accused of crimes which he had never committed. One

must have sprung from the very dust not to respect past obligations, particularly when misfortune has rendered them sacred; and vulgarity joined to crime inspires us with as much contempt as horror. No man of real superiority has been remarked amongst those who incited the convention to condemn the King; the popular tide rose and fell at certain words and certain phrases, while the talent of so eloquent an orator as Vergniaud could not influence the public mind. It is true, that the greater part of the deputies who defended the King took a detestable ground. They began by declaring that he was guilty; and one among them said at the tribune, that *Louis XVI. was a traitor, but that the nation ought to pardon him*; and this they called the tactics of the assembly! They pretended that it was necessary to humour the reigning opinion, that they might moderate it at a proper time. With such cautious prudence as this, how could they resist their enemies, who sprang with all their force upon the victim? In France, they always capitulate with the majority, even when they wish to oppose it; and this miserable finesse assuredly diminishes the means instead of increasing them. The power of the minority can consist only in the energy of conviction.

What are the weak in numbers, if they are also weak in sentiment?

St. Just, after having searched in vain for authentic facts against the King, finished by declaring that "no one could reign innocently;" and nothing could better prove the necessity of the inviolability of kings than this maxim; for, there is no king who might not be accused in some way or another, if there were no constitutional barrier placed around him. That which surrounded the throne of Louis XVI. ought to be held sacred more than any other, since it was not tacitly understood as elsewhere, but solemnly secured.

The deputies from the Gironde wished to save the King; and to that end they demanded an appeal to the people. But in demanding this appeal, they continued to concur in sentiment with the Jacobins, incessantly repeating that the King deserved death. This was deserting the cause entirely. Louis XVI. says Biroteau, is already condemned within my heart; but I demand an appeal to the people that he may be condemned by them. The deputies from the Gironde were right in requiring a competent tribunal, if there could exist one for such a cause: but how much more effect might they not have produced, if they had required it

in favour of an innocent person, instead of for one whom they pretended to be guilty. The French, it can never be too often repeated, have not yet learned in civil affairs to be moderate when they are strong, and bold when they are weak; they should transplant into politics all their military virtues, and their affairs would be improved by it.

What is most difficult to be conceived, in this terrible discussion of the national convention, is the abundance of words that every one had ready upon such an occasion. It was natural to expect to find a concentrated fury in those who desired the death of the King; but to make it a subject for the display of wit, for the turning of phrases, what obstinacy of vanity in such a scene.

Thomas Paine was the most violent of the American democrats: and yet, as there was neither calculation nor hypocrisy in his political exaggerations, when the sentence of Louis XVI. came under discussion, he alone advised what would have done honour to France if it had been adopted, the offer to the King of an asylum in America. The Americans are grateful to him, said Paine, for having promoted their independence. Considering this resolution only in a republican point of view, it was

the only one which could at that time have weakened the interest for royalty in France. Louis XVI. had not those talents which are necessary to regain a crown by force; for a situation which did not excite pity, would never have produced devotedness. Death inflicted on the most upright man in France, but, at the same time, the least to be feared—on him, who, if I may use the expression, had taken no part in his own fate, could only be a dreadful homage paid to his former greatness. There would have been more of republicanism in a revolution which had evinced less fear and more justice.

Louis XVI. did not refuse, like Charles I. to acknowledge the tribunal before which he was tried; but answered to all the questions which were put to him, with unaltered gentleness. The President asked him why he had assembled the troops at the palace on the tenth of August, and he replied: "*The palace was threatened, all the Constituted Authorities saw it, and, as I myself was one of the Constituted Authorities, it was my duty to defend myself.*" How modest and unassuming was this manner of speaking of himself, and by what burst of eloquence could we be more deeply moved!

M. de Malesherbes, formerly the King's minister, stood forward to defend him. He was one of the three ministers, himself, M. Turgot, and M. Necker, who had advised the voluntary adoption of the principles of liberty to Louis XVI. He was obliged, together with the other two, to resign his place, in consequence of some opinions which the parliaments opposed; and now, notwithstanding his advanced age, he re-appeared to plead the cause of the King in the presence of the people, as he had formerly pleaded the cause of the people before the King; but the new master was implacable.

Garat, then Minister of Justice, and, in times better suited to him, one of the best writers of France, has told us, in his private memoirs, that when the duties of his dreadful situation compelled him to communicate to the King the sentence which condemned him to death, the King displayed, whilst listening to it, the most astonishing coolness; once only, he expressed by a gesture, his contempt and his indignation; it was at the article which accused him of having wished to spill the blood of the French people. His conscience revolted at that, although he had restrained every other feeling. On the very morning of his execution, he said to one of his servants, *Go to the*

Queen; but, stopping himself, he repeated, *Go to my wife.* He submitted, even at that moment, to the deprivation of his rank, which had been imposed upon him by his murderers. Without doubt he believed, that in every thing fate executes the designs of God upon his creatures.

The King's will exhibits the whole of his character. The most affecting simplicity reigns throughout: every word is a virtue, and we find in it all the intelligence which a mind just, temperate, and of infinite goodness, could inspire. The condemnation of Louis XVI. so affected every heart, that, on account of it, the Revolution was for several years considered as accursed.

CHAPTER XIII.

Charles I. and Louis XVI.

MANY persons have attributed the disasters of France to the weakness of the character of Louis XVI.; and it has been continually repeated, that his stooping to recognize the principles of liberty was one of the essential causes of the Revolution. It seems to me then a matter of curiosity, to show to those, who believe that in France, at this crisis, such or such a man would have sufficed to have prevented every thing; or, that the adoption of such or such a resolution would have arrested the progress of events;—it seems, I say, a matter of curiosity to show them, that the conduct of Charles I. was, in all respects, the converse of that of Louis XVI., and that, nevertheless, two opposite systems brought about the same catastrophe; so irresistible is the progress of revolutions caused by the opinion of the majority.

James I., the father of Charles, said "that men might form an opinion on the conduct of

kings, since they freely allowed themselves to scrutinize the decrees of Providence; but that their power could no more be called in question than that of God." Charles I. had been educated in these maxims; and he regarded as a measure equally inconsistent with duty, and with policy, every concession made by the royal authority. Louis X., a hundred and fifty years later, was modified by the age in which he lived; the doctrine of passive obedience, which was still received in England in the time of Charles, was no longer maintained even by the clergy of France in 1789. The English parliament had existed from time immemorial; and although it was not irrevocably decided that its consent was necessary for taxation, yet it was customary to ask its sanction. But as it granted subsidies for several years in anticipation, the King of England was not, as now, under the necessity of assembling it annually; and very frequently taxes were continued without having been renewed by the votes of the national representatives. The parliament, however, on all occasions, protested against this abuse; and upon this ground commenced the quarrel between the Commons and Charles I. He was reproached with two taxes which he levied without the assent of the nation. Irritated by this reproach, he

ordered, in pursuance of the constitutional right vested in him, that the parliament should be dissolved; and twelve years elapsed before he called another; an interruption almost unparallelled in the history of England. The quarrel of Louis XVI. began, like that of Charles I., by financial embarrassments; and it is always these embarrassments that render kings dependant upon their people; but Louis XVI. assembled the States General, which for nearly two centuries had been almost forgotten in France.

Louis XIV. had suppressed even the remonstrances of the parliament of Paris, the only privilege left to that body, when he registered the bursal edicts. Henry VIII. of England had caused his proclamations to be received as laws. Thus then, both Charles and Louis might consider themselves as inheriting unlimited power; but with this difference, that the people of England always relied, and with reason, upon the past to reclaim their rights, while the French demanded something entirely new, since the convocation of the States General was not prescribed by any law. Louis XVI., according to the constitution, or the non-constitution of France, was not under any obligation to assemble the States General; Charles I. in omitting for twelve years to convoke the English parlia-

ment, violated privileges which had been long recognized.

During the twelve years' suspension of the parliament under Charles, the Star-Chamber, an irregular tribunal which executed the will of the English Monarch, exercised every imaginable species of rigour. Prynne was sentenced to lose his ears for having written, according to the tenets of the puritans, against plays and against the hierarchy. Allison and Robins endured the same punishment because they expressed an opinion different from that of the Archbishop of York; Lilburne was exposed on the pillory, inhumanly scourged, and gagged, because his courageous complaints produced an effect upon the people. Williams, a bishop, underwent a similar punishment. The most cruel tortures were inflicted upon those who refused to pay the taxes imposed by a mere proclamation of the King; in a multitudinous variety of cases ruinous fines were levied on individuals by the same Star-Chamber; but, in general, it was against the liberty of the press that the utmost violence was displayed. Louis XVI. made scarcely any use of the arbitrary measure of *lettres de cachet* for the purpose of exile or imprisonment; no one act of tyranny can be laid to his charge; and, far from restraining

the liberty of the press, it was the Archbishop of Sens, the King's prime minister, who, in the name of his Majesty, invited all writers to make known their opinions upon the form and the manner of assembling the States General.

The Protestant religion was established in England; but as the church of England recognizes the king as its head, Charles I. had certainly much more influence over his church, than Louis had over that of France. The English clergy, under the guidance of Laud, although Protestant, was not only in all respects more independent, but more rigid than the French clergy; for the philosophic spirit had gained a footing among some of the leaders of the Gallican church; and Laud was more decidedly orthodox than the Cardinal de Rohan, the principal bishop of France. The ecclesiastical authority and the hierarchy were supported by Charles with extreme severity. The greater part of the cruel sentences, which disgraced the Star-Chamber, had for their object the enforcing of respect for the clergy. That of France seldom defended itself, and never found defenders in others: both were equally crushed by the Revolution.

The English nobility did not resort to the pernicious measure of emigration, nor to the

still more pernicious measure of calling in foreigners: they encircled the throne with constancy, and combated on the side of the King during the civil war. The principles of philosophy, which were in vogue in France at the commencement of the Revolution, excited a great number of the nobles themselves to turn their own privileges into ridicule. The spirit of the seventeenth century did not prompt the English nobility to doubt the validity of their own rights. The Star-Chamber punished with extreme severity some persons who had ventured to ridicule certain lords. Pleasantry is never interdicted to the French. The nobles of England were grave and serious, while those of France were agreeable triflers; and yet both the one and the other were alike despoiled of their privileges; and, widely as they differed in all their measures of defence, they were strikingly assimilated in their ruin.

It has often been said that the great influence of Paris over the rest of France, was one of the causes of the Revolution. London never obtained the same ascendant over England, because the principal English nobility lived much more in the provinces than those of France. Lastly, it has been pretended, that the prime minister of Louis XVI., M. Necker, was swayed

by republican principles, and that such a man as Cardinal Richelieu might have prevented the Revolution. The Earl of Strafford, the favourite minister of Charles I., was of a firm, and even despotic character; he possessed one advantage over Cardinal Richelieu, that of a high military reputation, which always gives a better grace to the exercise of absolute power. M. Necker enjoyed the greatest popularity ever known in France; the Earl of Strafford was always the object of popular animosity; yet each was the victim of a revolution, and each was sacrificed by his master: the former, because he was denounced by the Commons; the latter, because the courtiers demanded his dismissal.

Lastly (and this is the most striking point of contrast), Louis XVI. has been always blamed for not having taken the field, for not having repelled force by force, and for his insuperable dread of civil war. Charles I. began the civil war, with motives doubtless very plausible, but still he began it. He quitted London, repaired to the country, and put himself at the head of an army which defended the royal authority to the last extremity. Charles I. refused to recognize the competency of the tribunal which condemned him; Louis XVI. never made a single objection to the authority of his judges. Charles

was infinitely superior to Louis in capacity, in address, and in military talents;—every thing in short formed a contrast between these two monarchs, except their unhappy catastrophe.

There was, however, one point of resemblance in their sentiments, which alone can account for the similarity of their destinies,—Charles I. was from the bottom of his heart attached to Catholicism, at that time proscribed in England by the reigning opinion; and Louis XVI. was anxious to preserve the ancient political institutions of France. This similarity caused the destruction of both. It is in the art of directing public opinion, or of yielding to it at the proper moment, that consists the science of government in modern times.

CHAPTER XIV.

War between France and England. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox.

DURING many centuries the contentions of France and England have been the source of misery to those two countries. It used to be a contest for power; but the struggle caused by the Revolution cannot be considered under the same aspect. If there have been, in the course of twenty-three years, circumstances in which England might have treated with France, it must also be allowed that during that time she has had strong reasons for making war upon her rival, and more frequently still, for defending herself against attack. The first rupture, which broke out in 1793, proceeded from motives the most just. If the Convention, while guilty of the murder of Louis XVI., had not professed and propagated principles subversive of all government, if it had not attacked Belgium and Holland, the English might have taken no more concern in the death of Louis XVI. than Louis XIV. did in that of Charles I. But, at the

moment when the ministry dismissed the Ambassador of France, the English nation wished for war still more eagerly than its government.

I think I have sufficiently shown, in the preceding chapters, that in 1791, during the continuance of the Constituent Assembly, and even in 1792, under the Legislative Assembly, foreign powers ought not to have acceded to the Convention of Pilnitz. If, then, English diplomacy had any share in that great political act, it interfered too soon in the affairs of France, and Europe was a sufferer by the interference, since immense military forces were thus acquired by the French. But, at the moment when England formally declared war against France, in 1793, the Jacobins were in complete possession of the supreme power; and not only their invasion of Holland, but their crimes, and the principles which they proclaimed, made it a duty to break off all communication with them. The perseverance of England at this epoch preserved her from the troubles which menaced her internal tranquillity at the time of the mutiny of the fleet, and of the fermentation of the popular societies; and likewise supported the hopes of the well-meaning, by showing them a spot upon the earth where morality and liberty were united to great power. Had the English nation

been seen sending ambassadors to assassins, the true strength of that wonderful island would have abandoned her; the confidence which she inspires would have been lost.

It does not follow from these views, that the Opposition, who wished for peace, and Mr. Fox, who, by his astonishing talents represented a party in his own person, were not actuated by the most honourable sentiments. Mr. Fox complained, and with reason, that the friends of liberty were incessantly confounded with those who polluted it; and he feared lest the re-action of so unfortunate an attempt should weaken the spirit of freedom, which is the vital principle of England. In fact, if the Reformation had failed three centuries ago, what would have become of Europe? And in what state would Europe now be, if France were to be deprived of all that she has gained by her political reform.

Mr. Pitt at this epoch rendered great services to England, by holding with a firm hand the helm of affairs. But, notwithstanding the perfect simplicity of his tastes and habits, he leaned too much to the love of power; having become minister at a very early age, he never had time to live in the capacity of a private man, and by that means to experience the ope-

ration of authority upon those who are subject to it. His heart had no sympathy with weakness; and the political artifices, which men have agreed to call machiavelism, were not viewed by him with all the contempt which might have been expected from a genius like his. Yet his admirable eloquence made him love the debates of a representative government: his talents were still a tie between him and liberty; for he was ambitious of convincing, whereas men of moderate powers aspire only at command. The sarcastic tone of his speeches was singularly adapted to the circumstances in which he was placed: when all the aristocracy of sentiment and principle triumphed at the sight of popular excesses, the energetic irony of Mr. Pitt suited the Patrician who throws upon his adversaries the odious colour of irreligion and immorality.

The perspicuity, the sincerity, the warmth of Mr. Fox could alone escape these sharp-edged weapons. He had no mystery in politics; for he regarded publicity as still more necessary in the affairs of nations, than in any other relations of men. Even when his opinion was not followed, he was better liked than his opponent; and, although force of argumentation was the distinctive characteristic of his eloquence, so

much of soul was perceived beneath his reasoning, that it was impossible not to be moved by it. His character, like that of his antagonist, bore the stamp of English dignity; but he had a natural candour, which intercourse with the world was unable to impair, because the benevolence of genius is unalterable.

It is not necessary to decide between these two great men, nor is there any person who would dare to think himself qualified to judge in such a cause. But the salutary reflection, which ought to arise from the sublime discussions of which the English parliament was the theatre, is this;—that the ministerial party was always in the right when it combated Jacobinism and military despotism, but always in the wrong, and greatly in the wrong, when it made itself the enemy of liberal principles in France. The members of the Opposition, on the contrary, deviated from the noble functions which are attributed to them, when they defended men whose crimes were ruining the cause of the human race; and this same Opposition has deserved well of posterity, when it supported the generous few of the friends of freedom, who for twenty-five years have devoted themselves to the hatred of both parties in France, and who have no strength but what

they derive from one powerful alliance—the alliance of truth.

One fact may give an idea of the essential difference which exists between the Tories and the Whigs, the Ministerialists and the Opposition, in relation to the affairs of France. The spirit of party goes the length of stripping the most glorious actions of their true qualities, so long as those who performed them live: but it is not for this the less certain, that antiquity offers nothing more noble than the conduct of General la Fayette, of his wife, and of his daughters, in the prisons of Olmutz.* The General was confined in these, on the one hand for having quitted France after the imprisonment of the King, and on the other for having declined any connexion with the governments which were carrying on war against his country; and the admirable Madame de la Fayette, just

* The most exact details on this affair are to be found in the excellent work of M. Emmanuel de Toulongeon, entitled, "History of France from 1789." It is of importance to strangers, that they be made acquainted with the trustworthy writings of the Revolution: for never was there published on any subject so great a number of books and pamphlets, in which falsehood turned itself into so many forms, that it might supply the place of talent, and satisfy vanities of a thousand kinds.

escaped from the dungeons of Robespierre, lost not a single day in proceeding to incarcerate herself with her husband, and expose herself to all the sufferings which have abridged her life. So much firmness in a man who had been for so long a time faithful to the same cause, so much conjugal and filial love in his family, could not but interest the country, of whose soil these virtues are the native growth. General Fitz-Patrick demanded, therefore, that the English ministry should intercede with their allies to obtain from them the liberty of General la Fayette. Mr. Fox pleaded this cause; the English parliament heard the sublime speech, of which we shall transcribe the conclusion: and yet the representatives of a free country did not rise in a body to accede to the proposition of the orator, who on this occasion should have been only their interpreter. The ministers opposed the motion of General Fitz-Patrick, by saying, as usual, that the captivity of General la Fayette concerned the powers of the Continent, and that England, in meddling with it, would violate the general principle which forbids her to interfere in the internal administration of foreign countries. Mr. Fox combated admirably this wily and evasive answer. Mr. Windham, Secretary at War, denied the eulogiums which Mr.

Fox had pronounced on General la Fayette; and it was upon this occasion that Mr. Fox replied to him as follows:

"The Secretary at War has spoken, and his principles are henceforth in open day. Those must never be pardoned who begin revolutions, and that, in the most absolute sense, without distinction of circumstances and of persons. However corrupt, however intolerant, however oppressive, however hostile to the rights and happiness of humanity a government may be; however virtuous, however moderate, however patriotic, however humane the reformer, the man who begins the justest reformation should be devoted to the most irreconcileable vengeance. If he is succeeded by men who tarnish the cause of liberty by their excesses, they may be pardoned. All our detestation of criminal revolution should be heaped upon him who begins a revolution that is virtuous. Thus, the Right Honourable Secretary at War pardons Cromwell with all his heart; for Cromwell appeared not till the second act, found things prepared, and only turned circumstances to his own profit; but our great, our illustrious ancestors, Pym, Hampden, Lord Falkland, the Earl of Bedford, all these personages to whom we have been accustomed to pay honours nearly

divine, for the good which they have done to the human race, and to their country, for the evils from which they delivered us, for the prudent courage, the generous humanity, the noble disinterestedness with which they prosecuted their plans;—these are the men, who, according to the doctrine professed this day, ought to be devoted to eternal execration.

"We have hitherto considered Hume to be sufficiently severe, when he said that Hampden died at the moment the most favourable for his glory, because, had he lived a few months longer, he would, probably, have displayed the latent fire of a violent ambition. But how gentle does Hume now appear, when compared with the Right Honourable Secretary at War. According to the latter, men, who by their crimes have blackened the glorious cause of liberty, have been virtuous, in comparison of those who wished merely to deliver their country from the weight of abuses, from the scourge of corruption, and from the yoke of tyranny. Cromwell, Harrison, Bradshaw, the masked executioner by whose hand fell the head of Charles I. —these are the objects of the tender commiseration and enlightened indulgence of the Right Honourable Secretary at War. Hampden, Bedford, Falkland killed in fighting for

his king—such are the criminals for whom he does not find hatred enough in his heart, nor punishment enough upon earth. The Right Honourable Secretary at War has positively asserted it: in the eyes of his kings and his absolute ministers, Collot d'Herbois is far from meriting so much vengeance and hatred as La Fayette.

"At first I was astonished at this opinion; I now begin to comprehend it. In fact, Collot d'Herbois is a miscreant and a monster; La Fayette is a great character, and a man of worth. Collot d'Herbois pollutes Liberty, and renders her hateful by all the crimes which he dares to clothe with her name: La Fayette honours her; he makes her an object of love, by all the virtues with which he shows her to be surrounded, by the nobleness of his principles, by the unalterable purity of his actions, by the wisdom and force of his understanding, by the gentleness, the disinterestedness, the generosity of his soul. Yes, I acknowledge it, according to the new principles, it is La Fayette who is dangerous, he is the man whom we must hate; and the *poor* Collot d'Herbois is entitled to that tender accent, with which the interest of the House has been solicited for him. Yes, I do justice to the sincerity of the Right Honourable

Secretary at War; he has feigned nothing, I am sure; the tone of his voice has been only the expression of his soul, as often as he has implored compassion for the poor Collot d'Herbois, or summoned from every corner of the earth, hatred, vengeance, and tyranny, to exterminate General La Fayette, his wife and his children, his companions and his servants.

"But I, who feel otherwise, I, who am still what I have always been, I, who will live and die the friend of order but of liberty, the enemy of anarchy but of slavery, have thought that it was not allowed to me to remain silent after such outrages, after such blasphemies vomited forth within the precincts of an English parliament, against innocence and truth, against the rights and the happiness of the human species, against the principles of our glorious Revolution; finally, against the sacred memory of our illustrious ancestors, of those men whose wisdom, whose virtues, and whose benefits, will be revered and blessed by the people of England to the latest generation."

In spite of the incomparable beauty of these words, such was the terror with which the fear of the subversion of social order then inspired the English, that even the name of liberty no longer re-echoed in their soul. Of all the

sacrifices which a man can make to his conscience as a public character, there are none greater than those to which Mr. Fox doomed himself during the French Revolution. It is nothing to support persecutions under an arbitrary government; but to find oneself abandoned by public opinion in a free country; to be deserted by one's old friends, when, among them, there is such a man as Burke; to find oneself unpopular in the very cause of the people; this is a misery for which Mr. Fox deserves to be pitied as much as admired. He was seen to shed tears in the House of Commons as he pronounced the name of that illustrious Burke, who had become so violent in his new passions. He inclined towards him, because he knew that his heart was broken by the death of his son: for friendship, in a character such as that of Fox, could never be altered by political feelings.

It might, however, be advantageous for England, that Mr. Pitt was at the head of the state in the most dangerous crisis in which that country ever found herself: but it was not less so that a mind enlarged as was that of Mr. Fox maintained principles in spite of circumstances, and knew how to preserve the household gods of the friends of freedom in the midst of the conflagration. It is not to please the two

parties that I thus praise them both, although they supported very opposite opinions. The contrary should perhaps be the case in France; the different factions are there almost always equally blameable; but, in a free country, the partisans of the ministry and the members of the opposition may all be right after their own way, and they are each frequently productive of good according to the times: the only point of importance is that the power acquired by the struggle should not be continued after the danger is past.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Political Fanaticism.

THE events which we have hitherto been surveying belong to a species of history of which an example may be found elsewhere. But an abyss is now about to open under our feet; we know not what course to pursue in such a gulf, and thought, through terror, precipitates itself from misery to misery, till it reaches the annihilation of all hope and of all consolation. We shall pass as rapidly as we can over this frightful crisis, in which there is no individual to fix attention, no circumstance to excite interest: all is uniform, though extraordinary; all is monotonous, though horrible; and we should be in some measure ashamed of ourselves, if we could contemplate these brutal atrocities sufficiently near to characterize them in detail. Let us only examine the great principle of these monstrous phenomena,—political fanaticism.

Worldly passions have always made a part of religious fanaticism; and frequently, on the

contrary, true faith by some abstract ideas feeds political fanaticism: the mixture is found every where, but it is on the proportion of the ingredients that the good and the mischief depend. Social order is in itself an intricate and irregular edifice: in the mean time it cannot be conceived other than it is; but the concessions, with which it is necessary to comply in order that it may subsist, torment exalted souls with pity, satisfy the vanity of some, and provoke the irritation and the desires of the greater number. It is to this state of things, more or less strongly marked, more or less softened by morals, manners, and intelligence, that the political fanaticism must be ascribed, of which we have been witnesses in France. A sort of frenzy seized the poor in the presence of the rich; the distinctions of nobility adding to the jealousy which property inspires, the people were proud of their multitude; and all that constitutes the power and splendour of the few, appeared to them mere usurpation. The germs of this sentiment have existed at all times; but never was human society felt to tremble at its foundations, till the era of terror in France: we need not be surprised, if this hateful scourge has left deep traces in men's minds; and the only reflection in which we can indulge, and

which the remainder of this work will, I hope, confirm, is, that the remedy for popular passions is to be found, not in despotism, but in the sovereignty of law.

Religious fanaticism presents an indefinite futurity, which exalts all the hopes of the imagination: but the enjoyments of life are as unlimited in the eyes of those who have not tasted them. The Old Man of the Mountain sent his subjects to death by means of allowing them delights on this earth; and we frequently see men expose themselves to death in order to live better. On the other hand, vanity takes a pride in defending the advantages which it possesses; it appears less guilty than the assailants, because an idea of property attaches itself to what has long been ours, even when our claim has no foundation in justice. Nevertheless the two elements of religious fanaticism and political fanaticism always subsist; the wish to rule in those who are at the top of the wheel, the eager desire to make it revolve in those who are beneath. Such is the principle of every commotion; the pretext changes, the cause remains, and the reciprocal fury continues the same. The quarrels of the patricians and the plebeians, the servile war, the war of the peasants, that which still goes on between the nobles and the commonalty, have

all equally had their origin in the difficulty of maintaining human society without disorder and without injustice. Men could not exist at this period either apart or united, if respect for the law were not established in their minds: crimes of every sort would arise from that very society, which ought to prevent them. The abstract power of representative governments irritates in nothing the pride of men, and it is by this institution that the torches of the furies are to be extinguished. They were lighted in a country where every thing was self-love; and self-love irritated does not, with the people, resemble a fugitive shadow: it is a feeling which can be gratified only by murder.

Massacres, not less frightful than those of the reign of terror, have been committed in the name of religion. The human race has exhausted itself for many centuries in useless efforts to constrain all men to the same belief. That end could not be attained: and the simplest idea, toleration, such as William Penn professed, has for ever banished from the North of America, the fanaticism of which the South has been the horrid theatre. It is the same with political fanaticism; liberty alone can calm it. After a certain time, some truths will no longer be denied; and old institutions will be

spoken of as ancient systems of physics, now entirely effaced by the evidence of facts.

As the different classes of society had scarcely any relations with each other in France, their mutual antipathy was of course the stronger. There is no man, not even the most criminal, whom we can detest when we know him, as we do when he is only delineated to us. Pride places barriers every where, and limits no where. In no country have the men of birth been so completely strangers to the rest of the nation: they came into contact with the second class only to bruise it. Elsewhere, a careless good nature, habits of life even somewhat vulgar, contribute to confound men, between whom the law makes distinction; but the elegance of the French nobility increased the envy which they inspired. To imitate their manners was as difficult as to obtain their prerogatives. The same scene was repeated from rank to rank; the irritability of a nation, lively in the extreme, inclined each one to be jealous of his neighbour, of his superior, of his master; and all, not satisfied with ruling, laboured for the humiliation of each other. It is by multiplying political relations between different ranks, by giving them the means of being mutually serviceable, that we can mollify in the heart the most horrible of passions,—the ha-

tred of men against their fellow-mortals, the mutual aversion of creatures whose remains must all repose under the same earth, and be together re-animated at the last day.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of the Government called the Reign of Terror.

WE know not how to contemplate the fourteen months which followed the proscription of the Gironde on the 31st May, 1793. We seem as if we were descending, like Dante, from circle to circle, always lower in hell. To the animosity against the nobles and the priests succeeded a feeling of irritation against the landholders, next, against talents, then even against personal beauty; finally, against whatever was to be found of great or of generous in human nature. At this epoch, facts run into confusion, and we are afraid of being unable to enter into such a history, without leaving on the imagination indelible tracks of blood. We are therefore forced to take a philosophical view of events, on which the eloquence of indignation might be exhausted without satisfying the internal sentiment which they awaken.

Doubtless, in taking away all restraints from the people, they were placed in a condition to commit every crime; but whence comes it that

this people was so depraved? The government, which is spoken of as an object of regret, had time to have formed the nation which showed itself so culpable. The priests, whose instruction, example, and riches are fitted, we are told, to do so much good, had presided over the childhood of the generation which now turned against them. The class that rose into action in 1789, was of course accustomed to those privileges of feudal nobility, so particularly agreeable, we are still assured, to the persons by whom their weight must be borne. Whence comes it then, that so many vices germinated under the ancient institutions? Let it not be pretended, that the other nations of our days would have shown themselves similar, if a revolution had taken place among them. French influence excited insurrections in Holland and Switzerland, and nothing resembling jacobinism manifested itself there. During the forty years of the History of England, which in so many points of view may be assimilated to that of France, there is no period that can be compared to the fourteen months of terror. What must we conclude from this? That for a century past no people had been so miserable as the people of France. If the negroes at St. Domingo committed a

much greater number of atrocities, it is because they had been still more oppressed.

It by no means follows from these reflections, that the crimes deserve less detestation; but after more than twenty years, we should unite to the lively indignation of contemporaries the enlightened scrutiny which ought to serve as a guide for the future. Religious disputes provoked the English Revolution: love of equality, the subterraneous volcano of France, likewise inflamed the sect of the Puritans; but the English were then really religious, and religious Protestants—a circumstance which increases at once austerity and moderation. Although England, like France, polluted herself with the murder of Charles I. and the despotism of Cromwell, the reign of the Jacobins is a frightful singularity, the burden of which, in history, must be borne exclusively by France. He however has not thought much on the subject of civil commotions, who does not know that reaction is equal to the action. The extravagances of revolts supply the measure of the vices of institutions; and it is not to the government which is wished for, but to that which has long existed, that we must ascribe the moral state of a nation. At present it is said, that the French have been

corrupted by the revolution. But whence come the inordinate propensities which expanded themselves so violently in the first years of the revolution, if not from a century of superstition and arbitrary power?

It seemed in 1793 that there was no more room for revolutions in France, when every thing was overturned, the throne, the nobility, the clergy, and when the success of the armies gave reason to expect peace with Europe. But it is precisely when the danger is past, that popular tyrannies are established: so long as there are obstacles and fears, the worst men observe moderation: when they have triumphed, their restrained passions show themselves without a curb.

The Girondists made several vain efforts, after the death of the King, to put some laws in activity; but they could not obtain a reception for any system of social organization; the instinct of ferocity rejected every thing of the sort. Herault de Séchelles proposed a constitution scrupulously democratical; the Assembly adopted it, but ordained that it should be suspended till the peace. The Jacobin party wished to exercise despotism, and it is very erroneously that this government has been described as a state of anarchy. Never has a stronger autho-

rity reigned over France; but it was an anomalous species of power: springing out of popular fanaticism, it struck alarm into the very persons who commanded in its name; for they always feared to be proscribed in their turn by men who would go still further than they in the daring boldness of persecution. Marat alone lived without fear at this time; for his figure was so mean, his sentiments so extravagant, his opinions so sanguinary, that he was sure that nobody could plunge deeper than himself in the abyss of crimes. Even Robespierre was unable to reach so infernal a security.

The last men, who at this time are still worthy to occupy a place in history, are the Girondists. They felt without doubt at the bottom of their hearts a keen remorse for the means which they had employed to overturn the throne; and when these very means were directed against themselves, when they recognized their own weapons in the wounds which they received, they must have reflected without doubt on that rapid justice of revolutions, which concentrates in a few instants the events of several ages.

The Girondists contended every day and every hour, with an undaunted eloquence, against discourses sharpened like poignards,

which carried death in every phrase. The murderous nets, with which the proscribed were enveloped on all sides, in no respect took away from them that presence of mind, which alone can give effect to all the talents of the orator.

M. de Condorcet, when he was put out of the protection of the law, wrote a work on the perfectibility of the human mind, which doub less contains errors, but of which the general system is inspired by the hope of the happiness of men; this hope he nourished under the axe of the executioner, at the very moment when his own destiny was ruined without resource. Twenty-two of the republican deputies were brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and their courage did not fail for a single instant. When the sentence of death was pronounced upon them, one of them, Valazé, fell from the seat which he occupied; another deputy, also condemned, who was by his side, and thought that his colleague was afraid, with some reproaches rudely raised him; he raised him up dead. Valazé had just plunged a poignard into his heart, with a hand so firm, that he did not breathe a second after the blow was struck. Such however, is the inflexibility of the spirit of party, that these men, who defended whatever there was of respectability in France, could

not flatter themselves with exciting any interest by their efforts. They struggled, they fell, they perished, while public report, the harbinger of future fame, made them no promise of any recompense. Even the constitutional royalists were so lost to common sense, as to desire the triumph of the terrorists, that they themselves might thus be avenged upon the republicans. To no purpose were they aware, that they too were proscribed by these terrorists; irritated pride prevailed over every thing: in thus giving full scope to their resentments, they forgot the rule of conduct from which we should never deviate in politics: it is, always to rally round the party the least bad among your adversaries, even when that party is still remote from your own views.

The scarcity of provisions, the abundance of assignats, and the enthusiasm excited by the war, were the three grand springs of which the Committee of Public Safety availed itself, at once to animate and subdue the people. It terrified them, or paid them, or made them march to the frontiers, as best suited its purpose. One of the deputies to the Convention said, "We must continue the war, that the convulsions of liberty may be the stronger." It is impossible to know whether the twelve

members of the Committee of Public Safety had conceived the idea of any government whatsoever. The direction of affairs, if we except the conduct of the war, was nothing else than a mixture of grossness and ferocity, in which no plan can be discovered, except that of making one half of the nation butcher the other. For it was so easy to be considered by the Jacobins as forming a part of the proscribed aristocracy, that half the inhabitants of France incurred the suspicion, which was sufficient to lead the way to death.

The assassination of the Queen, and of Madame Elizabeth, excited perhaps still more astonishment and horror, than the crime which was perpetrated against the person of the King; for no other object could be assigned for these horrible enormities, than the very terror which they were fitted to inspire. The condemnation of M. de Malesherbes, of Bailly, of Condorcet, of Lavoisier, was the decimation of the glory of France; eighty persons were the victims of each day, as if the massacre of St. Bartholomew were to be kept in a constant state of renewal. One great difficulty presented itself to this government, if the name of government can be given to it; it was the necessity which existed of employing all the means of civilization to carry on

the war, and all the violence of the savage state to excite the passions. The populace, and even the citizens, were not struck by the calamities of the elevated classes. The inhabitants of Paris walked about the streets, like the Turks during the plague, with this single difference, that obscure persons could easily enough preserve themselves from danger. Within view of the executions, the places of public entertainment were filled as usual; romances were published, entitled, *A New Sentimental Voyage*, *Dangerous Friendship*, *Ursula and Sophia:* in short, all the insipidity, and all the frivolity of life subsisted by the side of its gloomiest frenzies.

We have not attempted to dissemble what it is not in the power of men to blot out from their remembrance; but that we may breathe more at ease, we hasten to survey, in the following chapter, the virtues which did not cease to do honour to France, even at the most horrible period of her history.

CHAPTER XVII.

The French Army during the Reign of Terror; the Federalists, and La Vendée.

THE conduct of the French army, during the period of terror, was truly patriotic. No generals were seen violating their oath to the state; they repulsed foreigners, while they were themselves threatened with death upon the scaffold, at the slightest suspicion that might be excited against their conduct. The soldiers belonged not to any particular chief, but to France. France no longer existed but in the armies; there, however, at least, she was still beautiful: and her triumphant banners served, if we may so say, as a veil to the crimes committed in the interior. Foreigners were compelled to respect the rampart of iron which was opposed to their invasion; and, although they advanced within thirty leagues of Paris, a national feeling, still in full strength, did not permit them to advance at it. The same enthusiasm displayed itself in the navy. The crew of a man of war, *Le Vengeur*, battered to a wreck by the English, re-

peated, as with one voice, the cry of *Vive la république*, while they were sinking in the ocean; and the songs of a funereal joy seemed still to re-echo from the bottom of the deep.

The French army was then unacquainted with pillage, and its chiefs sometimes marched like private soldiers at the head of their troops, because they had not money to purchase the horses which they needed. Dugommier, commander in chief of the army of the Pyrennees, at the age of sixty, set out from Paris on foot to rejoin his troops on the frontiers of Spain. The men, on whom military glory has since conferred so much renown, distinguished themselves also by their disinterestedness. They wore, without blushing, uniforms which had become threadbare in the service, a hundred times more honourable than the embroidery and decorations of every kind, with which, at a later period, we have seen them bedizened.

Honest republicans, mingled with royalists, courageously resisted the Conventional Government at Toulon, at Lyons, and in some other departments. This party was known by the name of Federalists; but I do not believe that the Girondists, or their partizans, ever conceived the project of establishing a federa-

tive government in France. Nothing would be less suitable to the character of the nation, which loves splendour and bustle; for both of these require a city, which may be the focus of the talents and the riches of the empire. We may with reason complain of the corruption of a capital, and of all great assemblages of men in general; such is the condition of mankind: but in France we could scarcely bring back men's minds to virtue, but by the diffusion of knowledge and the desire of obtaining the suffrages of the public. The love of consideration or glory, in its different degrees, is the only thing that is able to raise us gradually from egotism to conscientiousness. Besides, the political and military state of the great monarchies which surround France would endanger her independence, if the strength of her union were weakened. The Girondists never thought of any such plan; but, as they had many adherents in the provinces, where, by the simple effect of a national representation, political knowledge was beginning to be acquired, it was in the provinces that opposition to the factious tyrants of Paris displayed itself.

It was about this time, also, that the war of La Vendée began, and nothing does more honour to the royalist party, than the attempts at civil

war which were, then made. The people of these departments were able to resist the Convention and its successors for nearly six years, being headed by some gentlemen, who drew their principal resources from their own minds. The republicans, as well as the royalists, felt a profound respect for these warrior citizens. Lescure, La Roche Jacquelin, Charette, &c., whatever their opinions might be, fulfilled a duty to which all the French at that time might have thought themselves equally bound. The country, which was the theatre of the Vendean war, was intersected by hedges, intended to enclose the different estates. These peaceful hedges served for bulwarks to the peasants, become soldiers, who sustained one by one the most dangerous and most daring struggle. The inhabitants of these parts of the country had much veneration for the priests, whose influence at that time did good. But, in a state where liberty has long subsisted, the public mind would not need to be excited except by public institutions. The Vendeans, it is true, demanded in their distress some succours from England; but it was only auxiliaries, not masters, whom they accepted; for their own forces were much superior to those which they borrowed from abroad. They did not therefore

compromise the independence of their country. Accordingly the chiefs of la Vendée were held in consideration even by the opposite party, and they expressed themselves upon the Revolution with more moderation than the emigrants beyond the Rhine. The Vendeans having fought, so to say, man to man with the French, were not easily persuaded that their adversaries were but a handful of rebels, whom a single battalion could have brought back to their duty; and as they themselves had recourse to the power of opinion, they knew what they were, and acknowledged the necessity of dealing moderately with them.

One problem remains still to be solved: it is, How was it possible for the government of 1793 and 1794 to triumph over so many enemies? The coalition of Austria, Prussia, Spain, and England, the civil war in the interior, the hatred with which the Convention inspired every man of consideration that remained out of prison;—none of these circumstances diminished the resistance, against which foreigners saw their efforts crushed to nothing. This prodigy can be explained only by the devotion of the nation to its own cause. A million of men took arms to repel the forces of the coalition; the people were animated with a frenzy, as fatal

in the interior as invincible without. Besides, the factitious but inexhaustible abundance of paper money, the low price of provisions, the degradation of the landholders, who were reduced to doom themselves externally to misery, all tended to make the working classes believe, that the yoke of inequality of fortune was at last on the point of ceasing to oppress them; this extravagant hope doubled the force which nature gave them: and social order, the secret of which consists in the endurance of the many, appeared suddenly threatened. But the military spirit, which then had no other end than the defence of the country, gave tranquillity to France by covering her with its shield. This spirit followed the same noble direction, till the moment when, as we shall see in the sequel, one man turned against liberty herself, the very legions that had sprung from the earth to defend her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Situation of the Friends of Liberty out of France during the Reign of Terror.

IT is difficult to relate the events of these horrible times without recalling one's own impressions in almost their original vivacity: and I know not why one should combat this natural inclination. For the best manner of representing such extraordinary circumstances is, to show in what state they placed individuals in the midst of the universal agony.

Emigration, during the reign of terror, was no longer a political measure. People escaped from France to save themselves from the scaffold, or remained to avoid ruin by exposing themselves to death. The friends of liberty were more detested by the jacobins than even the aristocrats, because they had been engaged in a closer struggle with one another, and because the jacobins feared the constitutionalists, whom they believed to be still in possession of a very considerable influence over the mind of the

nation. These friends of liberty found themselves, therefore, almost without a place of refuge upon earth. The pure royalists did not violate their principles in fighting with foreign armies against their country; but the constitutionalists could not adopt such a resolution: they were proscribed by France, and viewed with an evil eye by the ancient governments of Europe, who knew little of them but from the recitals of the French aristocrats, their most furious enemies.

I concealed in my house, in the Pays de Vaud, some friends of liberty, respectable in every way, both for their rank and for their virtues; and as a regular permission to authorize their residence could not then be obtained from the Swiss authorities, they bore Swedish names, which M. de Staël assigned them, that he might have the pleasure of yielding them protection. Scaffolds were erected for them on the frontier of their native country, and persecutions of every kind awaited them in foreign lands. Thus the monks, of the order of La Trappe, found themselves detained in an island, in the middle of a river which separates Prussia from Russia: each of the two countries rejected them as if tainted with a pestilence;

and yet no reproach could be alleged against them, except that they were faithful to their vows.

One particular circumstance may be of use in depicturing this epoch of 1793, when perils were multiplied at every step. A young French gentleman, M. Achille du Chayla, nephew of the Count de Jaucourt, wished to escape from France under a Swiss passport which we had sent him; for we thought ourselves quite at liberty to deceive tyrants. At Morel, a frontier town, situated at the foot of Mount Jura, suspicions were entertained that M. du Chayla was not what his passport pretended, and he was arrested with a declaration that he must remain a prisoner, till the lieutenant of the district of Nyon should attest that he was a Swiss. M. de Jaucourt was then staying in my house, under one of those Swedish names of which we were the inventors. At the news of his nephew's arrest, his despair was extreme; for the young man, at that time an object of pursuit, the bearer of a false passport, and, besides, son to one of the chiefs of the army of Condé, would have been instantly shot, had his name been discovered. There remained only one hope; it was to prevail upon M. Reverdil, lieutenant-

bailiff of the district of Nyon, to claim M. du Chayla as in reality a native of the Pays de Vaud.

I went to M. Reverdil to ask this favour of him: he was an old friend of my parents, and one of the most enlightened and most respectable men in French Switzerland.* He at first refused, opposing to me the most weighty motives; he was scrupulous of deviating from truth for any object whatsoever, and besides, as a magistrate, he was fearful of compromising his country by an act of falsehood. "If the truth is discovered," said he, "we shall no longer have the right of claiming our own countrymen who may be arrested in France; and thus I expose the interest of those who are entrusted to me, for the safety of a man to whom I owe nothing." This argument had a very plausible aspect: but the pious fraud which I solicited could alone save the life of a man, over whose head the axe of the murderer was suspended. I remained two hours with M. Reverdil, seeking to vanquish his conscience by his huma-

* M. Reverdil was chosen to preside over the education of the King of Denmark. He wrote, during his residence in the North, very interesting memoirs of the events of which he was a witness. These memoirs have not yet appeared.

nity; he resisted long, but when I repeated to him several times, "If you say *no*, an *only* son, a man without reproach, is assassinated within four-and-twenty hours, and your mere word kills him," my emotion, or rather his own, triumphed over every other consideration, and the young Du Chayla was claimed. It was the first time, that a circumstance presented itself to me, in which two duties struggled against each other with equal force. But I still think, as I thought twenty-three years ago, that the present danger of the victim ought to prevail over the uncertain dangers of the future. There is not in the short space of existence a greater chance of happiness, than to save the life of an innocent man; and I know not how it would be possible to resist this seduction, by supposing it in such a case to be one.

Alas! I was not always so fortunate in my connexions with my friends. It was necessary for me a few months afterwards to communicate to the man, the most susceptible of strong affection, and consequently of deep grief, M. Mathieu de Montmorency, the sentence of death pronounced upon his young brother, the Abbé de Montmorency, whose only crime was the illustrious name which he had received from his ancestors. At the same time the wife, the mo-

ther, and the mother-in-law of M. de Montmorency were alike threatened with destruction: a few days later, and all the prisoners were at this horrid epoch sent to the scaffold. One of the reflections which struck us the most forcibly in our long walks by the shores of the lake of Geneva, was the contrast of the noble scenes of nature around us, and of the brilliant sun of the end of June, with the despair of man—that prince of the earth, who would have wished to array inanimate objects in his own mourning. Dejection had seized us: the younger we were, the less resignation we had; for in youth especially we look for happiness, we think that we have a right to it, and we are shocked at the idea of not obtaining it. Yet it was in these very moments, when we were contemplating in vain the sky and the flowers, and were reproaching them with dispersing light and fragrance through the air in the presence of so many enormities, it was then that deliverance was preparing. A day, of which the new name disguises perhaps the date from strangers, the ninth of Thermidor, carried into the heart of Frenchmen an emotion of inexpressible joy. Poor human nature could never owe so lively a delight but to the cessation of sorrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

Fall of Robespierre, and change of System in the Government.

THE men and women who were conducted to the scaffold gave proofs of a courage that nothing could shake; the prisons presented the example of the most generous acts of devotion; fathers were seen sacrificing themselves for their sons, wives for their husbands; but the party of the worthy, like the King himself, showed themselves capable only of private virtues. In general, in a country where there is no freedom, energy is found only in the factious; but in England, the support of the law, and the feeling of justice, render the resistance of the upper classes quite as strong as the attack of the populace could be. Had a division not taken place among the deputies of the Convention themselves, it is impossible to say how long the atrocious government of the Committee of Public Safety would have lasted.

This Committee was not composed of men of superior talent; the machine of terror, the springs of which had been prepared for action

by events, exercised alone unbounded power. The government resembled the hideous instrument employed on the scaffold; the axe was seen rather than the hand which put it in motion. A single question was sufficient to overturn the power of these men; it was—how many are they? But their force was measured by the atrocity of their crimes, and nobody dared attack them. These twelve members of the Committee of Public Safety distrusted one another, as the Convention distrusted them, and they distrusted it; as the army, the people, and the partizans of the revolution, were all mutually filled with alarm. No name of this epoch will remain, except Robespierre. Yet he was neither more able nor more eloquent than the rest; but his political fanaticism had a character of calmness and austerity, which made him feared by all his colleagues.

I once conversed with him at my father's house, in 1789, when he was known merely as an advocate of the province of Artois, who carried to a great height his democratical principles. His features were mean, his complexion pale, his veins of a greenish hue; he maintained the most absurd propositions, with a coolness which had the air of conviction; and I could easily believe, that, at the be-

ginning of the Revolution, he had adopted sincerely certain ideas, upon the equality of fortunes as well as of ranks, which he caught in the course of his reading, and with which his envious and mischievous character was delighted to arm itself. But he became ambitious, when he had triumphed over his rival in the arts of the demagogue, Danton, the Mirabeau of the mob. The latter had more genius than Robespierre, and was more accessible to pity; but it was suspected, and with reason, that he was not proof against the seductions of money; a weakness which, in the end, always ruins demagogues; for the people cannot endure those who enrich themselves: this is a species of self-denial with which nothing can prevail upon them to dispense.

Danton was factious, Robespierre was hypocritical: Danton was fond of pleasure, Robespierre only of power; he sent to the scaffold some as counter-revolutionists, others as ultra-revolutionists. There was something mysterious in his manner, which caused an unknown terror to hover about in the midst of the ostensible terror which the government proclaimed. He never adopted the means of popularity then generally in use; he was not ill dressed; on the contrary, he was the only

person who wore powder in his hair; his clothes were neat, and his countenance had nothing familiar. The desire of ruling carried him, without doubt, to distinguish himself from others, at the very moment when equality in every thing was desired. Traces of a secret design are also perceived in the perplexed harangues which he made in the Convention, and which, in some respects, recall to our recollection those of Cromwell. It is rarely, indeed, that any one, who is not a military chief, can become dictator. But the civil power had then much more influence than the military: the republican spirit led to a distrust of all the victorious generals; the soldiers themselves delivered up their leaders, as soon as the least alarm with respect to their fidelity arose. Political dogmas, if the name can be applied to such wanderings of intellect, reigned at that time, and not men. Something abstract was wanted in authority, that every body might be thought to have a share in it. Robespierre had acquired the reputation of high democratical virtue, and was believed incapable of personal views: as soon as he was suspected, his power was at an end.

The most indecent irreligion served as a lever for the subversion of the social order. There

was a kind of consistency in founding crime upon impiety: it is an homage paid to the intimate union of religious opinions with morality. Robespierre conceived the idea of celebrating a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, flattering himself, doubtless, with being able to rest his political ascendency on a religion arranged according to his own notions; as those have frequently done who have wished to seize the supreme power. But in the procession of this impious festival, he bethought himself of walking the first, in order to claim pre-eminence over his colleagues; and from that time he was lost. The spirit of the moment, and the personal resources of the man, were not calculated for the enterprize. Besides, it was known that he was acquainted with no other means of getting rid of competitors, than by destroying them through the agency of the revolutionary tribunal, which gave murder an air of legality. The colleagues of Robespierre, not less detestable than himself, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, attacked him to secure their own safety: the abhorrence of crime did not inspire them with this resolution; they meant to kill a man, but not to change the government.

It was not so with Tallien, the hero of the 9th of Thermidor, nor with Barras, the com-

mander of the armed force on that day, nor with several other conventionalists who then joined them. They meant, in overturning him, to break with the same blow the sceptre of terror. Thus this man, who, during more than a year, had signed judgments of death to an unheard of amount, was seen bleeding on the very table where he was wont to affix his name to the horrible sentences. His jaw was shattered by a pistol ball; he could not even speak in his own defence: he, who had spoken so much for the proscription of others. Might it not be said that Divine justice does not disdain, in inflicting punishment, to strike the imagination of men by all the circumstances which can act upon it the most powerfully.

CHAPTER XX.

Of the State of Minds at the Moment when the Directorial Republic was established in France.

THE reign of terror ought to be ascribed exclusively to the principles of tyranny; they are there found quite entire. The popular forms, adopted by that government, were only a sort of ceremonial, which suited these savage despots; but the members of the Committee of Public Safety professed in the very tribune the code of machiavelism, that is to say, power founded upon the degradation of men; they only took care to translate the old maxims into new terms. The liberty of the press was much more odious to them than even to the ancient feudal or theocratic states; they allowed no security to the accused, either through the means of the laws, or through the means of the judges. Arbitrary will, without limits, was their doctrine; it was enough for them to assign as a pretext for every violence the peculiar name of their government, *The Public Safety:* a fatal expression, which implies the sacrifice

of morality to what it has been agreed to call the interest of the state, that is, to the passions of those who govern.

From the fall of Robespierre to the establishment of the Republican Government under the form of a Directory, there was an interval of about fifteen months, which may be considered as the true epoch of anarchy in France. Nothing is less like the period of terror than this time, though many crimes were still committed. The mournful inheritance of Robespierre's laws had not been renounced; but the liberty of the press began to revive, and truth along with it. The general wish was to establish wise and free institutions, and to get rid of the men who had governed during the reign of blood. Nothing, however, was so difficult as to satisfy this double desire; for the Convention still held the authority in its hands, and many of the friends of liberty feared that a counter revolution might take place, if those were deprived of power whose lives would be hazarded by the re-establishment of the old regime. The crimes, which have been committed in the name of liberty, are, however, a wretched security; the return of the men who had been made to suffer, would, of course, be dreaded; but people were quite ready to

sacrifice their principles to their security, should an opportunity present itself.

It was therefore a great misfortune for France that she was obliged to leave the commonwealth in the hands of the Convention. Some of the members were endowed with superior abilities; but those who had shared in the government of terror had necessarily contracted habits of servility and tyranny together. It was in this school that Bonaparte selected many of the men who afterwards established his power; and, as they sought shelter above every thing, they never felt fully assured but in despotism.

The majority of the Convention wished to punish some of the most atrocious deputies who had oppressed it; but it drew up the list of the guilty with a trembling hand, always apprehensive lest it should be itself accused of the laws which had served as a justification or pretext for every crime. The royalist party sent agents abroad, and found partisans in the interior, from the very irritation which was excited by the continuance of the conventional power. Nevertheless, the fear of losing all the advantages of the Revolution attached the people and the soldiers to the existing authority. The army always fought against foreigners with the same energy, and its exploits had

already obtained an important peace for France, the treaty of Bâle with Prussia. The people also, we should add, supported unheard of evils with astonishing perseverance; famine on the one hand, and the depreciation of the paper money on the other, were reducing the lowest class of society to a state of the utmost wretchedness. If the kings of France had made their subjects undergo half these sufferings, they would have revolted on all sides. But the nation believed that they were devoting themselves for their country, and nothing equals the courage inspired by such a conviction.

Sweden having acknowledged the French Republic, M. de Staël resided at Paris as minister. I passed some months there during the year 1795, when the society of Paris was truly a very curious spectacle. Each of us was soliciting the recall of some emigrants, our friends. I obtained at this time permission for several to return; in consequence of which the deputy Legendre, a man almost from the dregs of the people, brought an information against me in the Tribune of the Convention. The influence of women, the ascendant of good company, gilded saloons, appeared very terrible to those who were not admitted themselves, while their colleagues were seduced from them by invita-

tions. Every tenth day (for Sunday existed no more) all the elements of the old and the new regime were seen united in the evening, though not reconciled. The elegant manners of well-educated persons penetrated through the humble costume, which they still retained as in the days of terror. The men who had been converted from the Jacobin party entered for the first time into the society of the great world, and their self-love was more apt to take offence upon things which related to the tone of fashion, which they wished to imitate, than upon any other subject. The women of the old regime surrounded them, in order to obtain the return of their brothers, their sons, their husbands; and the insinuating flattery, of which they knew how to avail themselves, struck these rude ears, and disposed the most bitter of the factious to what we have since seen;—that is to say, to re-create a court, to bring back all its abuses, only taking great care to appropriate them to themselves.

The apologies of those who had shared in the reign of terror formed truly the most inconceivable school of sophistry, which it was possible to witness. Some said that they had been constrained to whatever they had done, though a thousand actions of spontaneous servility or

cruelty might have been cited against them. Others pretended that they had sacrificed themselves to the public good, though it was known that they had thought only on self-preservation: all threw the evil upon some individuals; and, what was a singular circumstance in a country famed for military bravery, several of the political leaders assigned fear, and nothing else, as a sufficient excuse for their conduct.

A well known member of the Convention was relating to me one day, among others, that at the moment when the revolutionary tribunal was decreed, he had foreseen all the calamities which resulted from it; "and yet," added he, "the decree passed the Assembly unanimously." Now, he himself was present at that sitting, voting for what he regarded as the establishment of judicial assassination: yet it did not once occur to his mind, as he related the fact to me, that resistance from him was a thing which might have been expected. Such ingenuousness of turpitude leaves a man in doubt almost of the very possibility of virtue.

The Jacobins who had been personally concerned in the crimes of the days of terror, such as Lebon, Carrier, &c. were nearly all distinguished by the same kind of physiognomy. They might be seen in the tribune of the Con-

vention reading their harangues, with a pale and nervous figure, going from side to side, like a beast of prey in its cage. Were they seated? they poised themselves, without rising or changing their place, in a sort of stationary agitation, which seemed to indicate merely the impossibility of repose.

In the midst of these depraved elements, there existed a party of republicans, the wreck of the Gironde, who had been persecuted with it, and were now coming forth from the prisons, or from the caverns, which had served them as a refuge from death. This party was worthy of esteem in many respects; but it was not cured of its democratical systems, and, besides, it had a suspicious spirit, which made it see every where favourers of the old regime. Louvet, one of the Girondists who escaped the proscription, and author of a romance, *Faublas*, which foreigners often take for a picture of French manners, was a sincere republican. He trusted nobody; he brought into politics the species of failing which constituted the misery of Rousseau's life; and many men of the same opinion resembled him in this respect. But the suspicions of the republicans, and Jacobins in France proceeded at first from their being un-

able to obtain a favourable reception for their extravagant principles; and secondly, from a certain hatred against the nobles, in which some bad emotions were blended. They were right in wishing to have no nobles in France, such as these had once been; but aversion from men of birth is a mean sentiment, which must be subdued before France can be organized in a permanent manner.

In 1795, however, the plan of a republican constitution was proposed, much more reasonable and better combined, than the monarchy decreed by the Constituent Assembly in 1791. Boissy d'Anglas, Daunou, and Lanjuinais, names which always meet us whenever a ray of freedom gleams over France, were members of the Committee of the Constitution. They ventured to propose two Chambers, under the names of the Council of Ancients, and the Council of Five Hundred; qualifications of property in order to be eligible; two steps of election, which, though not a good institution in itself, was then rendered necessary by circumstances, with a view to raise the sphere of choice; finally, a Directory composed of five persons. This executive power had not yet the authority requisite for the maintenance of order; it was des-

titute of several indispensable prerogatives, the want of which, as we shall see in the sequel, brought on destructive convulsions.

The attempt at a republic was not without grandeur; however, that it might succeed, it would perhaps have been necessary to sacrifice Paris to France, and to adopt federative forms, which, as we have stated, suit neither the character nor the habits of the nation. In a second point of view, the unity of the republican government appears impossible in a great country, and at variance with the nature of things. In other respects, the attempt failed chiefly by reason of the kind of men who exclusively filled all employments; the party to which they had belonged during the period of terror rendered them odious to the nation; thus, too many serpents were thrown into the cradle of Hercules. The Convention, instructed by the example of the Constituent Assembly, whose work had been overturned because it had abandoned it too quickly to its successors, passed the decrees of the 5th and of the 13th Fructidor, which kept two-thirds of the existing deputies in their places: it was however afterwards agreed that one of these thirds should be removed within eighteen months, and the other a year later. This decree produced

a terrible sensation in the public opinion, and completely broke the treaty which had been tacitly signed between the Convention and people of principle. Men were willing to pardon the Convention, on condition that it renounced power; but it was natural on the other hand that the Convention should wish to retain its authority, to serve at least as a safeguard. In these circumstances, the Parisians were somewhat too violent, and were perhaps exasperated by the eager desire of occupying every place, a passion which was then beginning to ferment in men's minds. It was known, however, that persons of great acknowledged worth were marked out as the future directors; the conventionalists wished to acquire honour by good selections; and perhaps it would have been wise to have waited for the appointed term, when the remainder of the deputies might have been legally and gradually removed. But some royalists were mingled with the party, who wished only to appropriate to themselves the places of the commonwealth; and, as has constantly happened for twenty-five years, at the moment when the cause of the Revolution seemed in the greatest danger, its defenders had on their side the people and the army, the suburbs and the soldiers. It was then that an alliance was

established between the force of the people and the force of the military, which soon rendered the latter mistress of the former. The French warriors, so worthy of admiration for the resistance which they opposed to the coalesced powers, made themselves, so to say, the janisaries of freedom at home. Meddling in the internal affairs of France, they disposed of the civil authority, and charged themselves with the task of effecting the different revolutions of which we have been witnesses.

The sections of Paris, on their side, were perhaps not exempt from the spirit of faction; for the cause of their tumult was of no urgent public interest, and they had only to wait eighteen months, when not a constitutionalist would remain in power. Impatience ruined them; they attacked the army of the Convention on the 13th of Vendemiaire; and the issue was not doubtful. The commander of this army was General Bonaparte: his name appeared for the first time in the annals of the world on the 13th Vendemiaire (4th October), 1795. He had already aided, but without being named, at the capture of Toulon, in 1793, when that city revolted against the Convention. The party which overturned Robespierre had left him without employment after the 9th of Ther-

midor; and as he had then no resource of private fortune, he presented a memorial to the committees of the government for leave to go to Constantinople to train the Turks to war. In the same manner Cromwell wished to set out for America at the commencement of the English Revolution. Barras, afterwards director, took an interest in Bonaparte, and selected him in the committees of the Convention to be its defender. It is pretended that General Bonaparte has said, that he would have taken part with the sections, if they had offered him the command of their battalions. I have my doubts of the truth of this anecdote; not that General Bonaparte was, at any period of the revolution, attached exclusively to any opinion whatsoever; but because he always felt too strongly the instinct of force, to choose to place himself on the side which was then necessarily the weakest.

Much apprehension was entertained in Paris, lest, on the morrow of the 13th Vendemiaire, the reign of terror should be re-established. In fact, those same conventionalists, who had sought to please when they believed themselves reconciled with people of principle, might rush into every excess, when they saw the fruitlessness of their endeavours to draw the veil of oblivion over their past conduct. But the

waves of the revolution were beginning to retire, and the lasting return of Jacobinism was already become impossible. One result, however, of the conflict of the 13th Vendemiaire was, that the Convention made a point of naming five directors who had voted for the death of the King, and as the nation in no respect approved this aristocracy of regicidal crime, it did not identify itself with its magistrates. Another result, not less unfortunate, of the 13th Vendemiaire was a decree of the 2d of Brumaire, which excluded from every public employment the relations of emigrants, and all those who in the sections had voted for *liberticidal* projects. Such was the expression of the day; for in France, at every revolution a new phrase is framed, which serves all the world, that every one may have sense or sentiment ready made to his hand, if perchance nature should have refused him the one or the other.

The decree of exclusion of the 2d Brumaire formed a class of proscribed persons in the state, which certainly is not preferable to a privileged class, and is not less inconsistent with equality in the eye of the law. The Directory had the power to banish, to imprison, to transport at its pleasure, individuals who were denounced as attached to the old *regime*, nobles, and

priests, to whom the benefit of the constitution was refused, and who were placed under the yoke of arbitrary will. An amnesty ordinarily accompanies the installation of every new government; but it was a sweeping proscription which distinguished that of the Directory. To what dangers was this government exposed as well by its want of constitutional prerogatives as by the revolutionary power with which it had been so prodigally invested.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the Twenty Months during which the Republic existed in France, from November 1795, to the 18th Fructidor (4th September), 1797.

WE must do justice to the Directors, and still more to the power of free institutions, in whatever form they are introduced. The first twenty months which followed the establishment of the republic exhibit a period of administration uncommonly remarkable. Five men, Carnot, Rewbell, Barras, Lareveillère, Letourneur, chosen in resentment, and not endowed for the most part with superior talents, arrived at power under the most unfavourable circumstances. They entered the palace of the Luxembourg, which was allotted them, without finding a table to write upon, and the state was not in better order than the palace. The paper money was reduced to almost the thousandth part of its nominal value; there were not in the public treasury a hundred thousand francs in specie; provisions were still so scarce that the dissatisfaction of the people on this point could with

difficulty be restrained; the insurrection of La Vendee was still going on; the civil disturbances had given rise to bands of robbers, known by the name of *Chauffeurs*, who committed horrible excesses throughout the country; and lastly, almost all the French armies were in a state of disorganization.

In six months the Directory raised France from this deplorable situation. Money replaced the paper currency without any shock; the old landholders lived peacefully by the side of those who had recently acquired national domains; the roads, and the country, were again rendered completely safe; the armies were but too victorious; the freedom of the press re-appeared; the elections followed their legal course, and France might have been said to be free, if the two classes of nobles and priests had enjoyed the same securities as the other citizens. But the sublime perfection of liberty consists in this, —that she can do nothing by halves. If you wish to persecute a single man in the state, justice will never be established for all; still more must this be the case, when a hundred thousand individuals are shut out from the protecting circle of the law. Revolutionary measures therefore spoiled the constitution from the first establishment of the Directory; the latter

half of the existence of this government, which lasted four years in all, was in every respect so wretched, that the mischief may easily be ascribed to the institutions themselves. Impartial history however will place on two lines widely different the Republic before the 18th Fructidor, and the Republic after that epoch,—if indeed the name of Republic can be deserved by factious authorities, who overturned one another, without ceasing to oppress the mass upon which they were continually falling.

During the first period of the Directory, the two extreme parties, the Jacobins and the Royalists, attacked it in the journals, each in their own mode, without meeting with any opposition from the government, which was not at all shaken by their efforts. The society of Paris was so much the more free, that the class of rulers made no part of it. This separation had, and doubtless, could not fail to have, in the end, many inconveniences; but, for the very reason that the government was not in fashion, people's minds were not agitated, as they have since been, by the unbridled desire of obtaining places; and there existed other objects of activity and interest. One circumstance particularly worthy of notice under the Directory is, the relation between the civil authority and the

army. It has often been said that freedom, as it exists in England, is not possible in a continental state, on account of the regular troops which must always be dependant on the head of the State. I shall reply elsewhere to these fears with respect to the continuance of liberty, which are always expressed by its enemies, by the very men who are unwilling to permit a single sincere attempt to be made in its favour. But we cannot be too much surprised at the manner in which the armies were managed by the Directory, up to the moment when, from an apprehension of the restoration of the ancient throne, it unfortunately introduced them into the internal revolutions of the state.

The best generals in Europe obeyed five directors, three of whom were only lawyers. The love of their country and of freedom was still powerful enough with the soldiers, to make them yield more respect to the law than to their general, if he wished to place himself above it. However, the indefinite prolongation of the war opposed a grand obstacle to the establishment of a free government in France; for, on the one hand, the ambition of conquest was beginning to take possession of the army, and on the other, the decrees for recruiting which were obtained

from the legislature, those decrees by means of which the Continent was afterwards enslaved, were already giving fatal wounds to reverence for civil institutions. We cannot but regret that at this period the powers still at war with France, that is to say, Austria and England, did not accede to the peace. Prussia, Venice, Tuscany, Spain, and Sweden, had already treated, in 1795, with a government much less regular than that of the Directory; and perhaps the spirit of invasion, which has done so much mischief to the people of the Continent, as well as to the French themselves, would not have been developed, if the war had ceased before the conquests of General Bonaparte in Italy. It was still time to direct French activity to political and commercial interests. War had not till then been considered, except as a means of securing the national independence; the army thought itself destined only to maintain the Revolution; the military were not a separate order in the state; finally, there was still in France some disinterested enthusiasm, on which the public welfare might have been founded.

From 1793 to the beginning of 1795, England and her allies would have dishonoured themselves in treating with France: what would

have been said of the august ambassadors of a free nation, returning to London after having received the embrace of Marat or Robespierre? But when once the intention of establishing a regular government was manifested, no means should have been neglected to interrupt the warlike education of the French.

England, in 1797, eighteen months after the installation of the Directory, sent negotiators to Lille; but the successes of the army of Italy had inspired the chiefs of the Republic with arrogance: the Directors were already old in power, and thought themselves firmly seated in it. All governments at their commencement wish for peace: men should know how to profit by this circumstance with ability; in politics as in war, there are critical moments which we should hasten to seize. But opinion in England was heated by Burke, who, by foretelling too truly the miseries of the Revolution, had acquired a great ascendant over his countrymen. At the time of the negotiation of Lille, he wrote some letters *on a regicide peace*, which revived the public indignation against France.

Mr. Pitt, however, had himself bestowed some praises on the constitution of 1795; and besides, if the political system adopted by France, what-

ever it might be, no longer endangered the security of other countries, what more could be required?

The passions of the emigrants, to which the English ministers always lent themselves too much, often led them into mistakes in their judgments upon the affairs of France. They thought to effect a powerful diversion by conveying the royalists to Quiberon: they occasioned only a scene of blood, the horror of which could not be lessened by the most courageous efforts of the English squadron. The unfortunate French gentlemen, who had vainly flattered themselves with finding in Brittany a great party ready to take up arms in their cause, were abandoned in an instant. General Lemoine, the commander of the French army, has related to me with admiration the reiterated attempts of the English seamen to approach the shore, and receive in their boats the emigrants enclosed on every side, and endeavouring by swimming to regain the hospitable ships of England. But the English ministers, and Mr. Pitt at their head, in constantly endeavouring to promote the triumph of the pure royalists in France, paid no regard to the opinion of the country; and from this mistake arose the obstacles which they so long met with in their political combinations. The

English administration, more than any other government in Europe, should have understood the history of the revolution in France, so similar to that of England; but it would appear as if the very resemblance had been a reason for their wishing to show themselves so much the more hostile to it.

CHAPTER XXII.

Two singular Predictions drawn from the History of the Revolution by M. Necker.

M. NECKER never published a political book, without braving some danger, either to his fortune or to himself. The circumstances in which he published his History of the Revolution might have exposed him to such a variety of fatal accidents, that I made many efforts to restrain him from that proceeding. He was put upon the list of emigrants, that is to say, subjected to the penalty of death, according to the French laws; and it was already rumoured on every side, that the Directory intended to invade Switzerland. Nevertheless, he published, about the end of 1796, a work on the Revolution in four volumes, in which he advanced the boldest truths. No other precaution was taken in it, than that of placing himself at the distance of posterity, in order to decide upon men and things. To this history full of warmth, of sarcasm, and of reasoning, he joined an analysis of the principal free constitutions of Europe; and

in reading this book, where every question is sifted to the bottom, we should be discouraged from writing, if we did not console ourselves with the reflection that eighteen additional years, and an individual mode of thinking, may still add some ideas to the same system.

Two very extraordinary predictions ought to be distinguished in that work; the one announces the struggle of the Directory with the Representative Body, which occurred some time afterwards, and was occasioned, as M. Necker had foretold, by the want of the constitutional prerogatives which were withheld from the executive power.

"The essential arrangement in the republican constitution given to France in 1795," said he, "the arrangement of prime importance, and which may bring order or freedom into danger, is the complete and absolute separation of the two principal authorities; the one, that which enacts the laws, the other, that which directs and superintends their execution. Every kind of power has been united and confounded in the monstrous organization of the National Convention; and now by another extreme, less dangerous without doubt, not one of the connexions between the two authorities, which the

welfare of the state requires, has been preserved. Recourse has all at once been had to written maxims; and upon the faith of a small number of political theorists, a belief has been adopted, that it is impossible to establish too strong a barrier between the legislative power and the executive. Let us first recollect, that the lessons drawn from example give us a very different result. We know no republic, in which the two powers, of which I have just spoken, were not, to a certain extent blended together; and ancient times, as well as modern, present us with the same picture. Sometimes a senate, the depository of the executive authority, proposes the laws to a more numerous council, or to the mass of the citizens at large; and sometimes, likewise, this senate, exercising in an inverse direction its right of participation in the legislative power, suspends or reverses the decrees of the many. Upon the same principles is founded the free government of England, where the monarch concurs in the laws which are enacted, both by his own assent, and by the presence of his ministers in the two houses of parliament. Last of all, America has given a modified right of rejection to the President of the Congress, to that head of the state, whom she has invested with executive authority; and she has at the

same time admitted one of the two divisions of the legislative body to a share of this prerogative.

"The republican constitution of France is the first model of a total separation between the two supreme powers, or rather the first attempt at such a separation.

"The executive authority will always act alone, and without any habitual inspection on the part of the legislative authority; and in return no assent of the executive authority will be requisite to the complete enactment of laws. Finally, the two powers will have no political tie except hortatory addresses, nor any channel of communication except envoys ordinary and extraordinary.

"Must not so new an organization bring inconveniences along with it? Must it not, at some future day, expose the kingdom to great danger? Let us suppose that the choice of five directors should fall, in whole or in part, upon men of a feeble or wavering character, what consideration will they be able to preserve, when they appear quite separate from the legislative body, and mere obedient machines?

"But if on the contrary, the five who are chosen directors should be men of vigour, bold, enterprising, and completely united with one

another, the moment might arrive, when we should perhaps regret the isolation of these executive chiefs, when we should wish that the constitution had put them under the necessity of acting in presence of, or in concert with, a branch of the legislative body. The moment might perhaps arrive, when we should repent of having left by the constitution itself an open field to the first suggestions of their ambition, to the first attempts of their despotism."

These bold and enterprising Directors were found; and as they were not allowed to dissolve the legislative body, they employed grenadiers, instead of the legal right which the constitution should have given them. Nothing as yet presaged this crisis, when M. Necker foretold it; but what is more astonishing, is, that he foresaw the military tyranny which was to result from the very crisis which he announced in 1796.

In another part of his work, M. Necker renders political philosophy popular by constantly mingling eloquence with reasoning. He feigns a speech of St. Louis, addressed to the French nation, and truly admirable; it should be read entire, for there is a charm and a sentiment in every word. The principal object, however, of this fiction is, to represent a prince,

who in his illustrious life showed himself capable of an heroic devotion, declaring to the nation which had long been subjected to his ancestors, that he wishes not to interfere by civil war with the efforts which they are now making to obtain liberty, even though that liberty should be republican, but that at the moment when circumstances would deceive their hopes and deliver them to despotism, he would come to aid his ancient subjects in freeing themselves from the oppression of a tyrant.

What a piercing view into futurity, and into the connexion of causes and effects, must he have had, who, twenty years ago, under the Directory, formed such a conjecture!

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the Army of Italy.

THE two great armies of the republic, those of the Rhine and of Italy, were almost constantly victorious, to the treaty of Campo Formio, which, for a short time suspended the long Continental war. The army of the Rhine, of which Moreau was General, had preserved all the republican simplicity; the army of Italy, commanded by General Bonaparte, dazzled by its conquests, but was every day deviating further from the patriotic spirit, which till then had animated the French armies. Personal interest was taking the place of a patriotic spirit, and attachment to one man was prevailing over a devotion to liberty. The generals of the army of Italy, likewise, sought ere long to enrich themselves, thus proportionally diminishing that enthusiasm for austere principles without which a free state cannot exist.

General Bernadotte, of whom I shall have occasion to speak in the sequel, came with a

division of the army of the Rhine to join the army of Italy. There was a sort of contrast between the noble poverty of the one, and the irregular riches of the other: they resembled only in bravery. The army of Italy was the army of Bonaparte, that of the Rhine was the army of the French republic. Yet nothing was so brilliant as the rapid conquest of Italy. Doubtless the desire, which the enlightened Italians have always felt, to unite themselves into one state, and thus to possess so much national strength as to have nothing either to fear or to hope from strangers, contributed much to favour the progress of General Bonaparte. It was with the cry of *Italy for ever*, that he passed the bridge of Lodi; and it was to the hope of independence, that he owed his reception among the Italians. But the victories which subjected to France countries beyond her natural limits, far from favouring liberty, exposed it to the danger of military government.

Bonaparte was already much talked of in Paris; the superiority of his capacity in business, joined to the splendour of his talents as a General, gave to his name an importance which no individual had ever acquired from the commencement of the revolution. But although in his proclamations he spoke incessantly of the

republic, attentive men perceived that it was in his eyes, a mean, and not an end. It was in this same light that he viewed all things and all men. A rumour prevailed, that he meant to make himself King of Lombardy. One day I met General Augereau, who had just returned from Italy, and who was cited, I believe then with reason, as a zealous republican. I asked him whether it was true that General Bonaparte was thinking of becoming a King. "No, assuredly," replied he; "he is a young man of too good principles for that." This singular answer was in exact conformity with the ideas of the moment. The sincere republicans would have regarded it as a degradation for a man, however distinguished he might be, to wish to turn the revolution to his personal advantage. Why had not this sentiment more force and longer duration among Frenchmen!

Bonaparte was stopped in his march to Rome by signing the peace of Tolentino; and it was then that he obtained the surrender of the superb monuments of the arts, which we have long seen collected in the Museum of Paris. The true abode of these master-pieces was, without doubt, Italy, and the imagination regretted their loss; but of all her illustrious prisoners it was

upon these that France justly set the highest value.

General Bonaparte wrote to the Directory, that he had made the surrender of these monuments one of the conditions of the peace with the Pope. *I have particularly insisted*, said he, *on the busts of Junius and Marcus Brutus, which I wish to send to Paris before the rest.* Bonaparte, who afterwards removed these busts from the hall of the legislative body, might have spared them the trouble of the journey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Introduction of Military Government into France by the occurrences of the 18th Fructidor.

NO epoch of the Revolution was more disastrous than that which substituted military rule for the well-founded hope of a representative government. I am, however, anticipating events; for the sway of a military chief was not as yet proclaimed, when the Directory sent grenadiers to the two Chambers: but this tyrannical proceeding, of which the soldiers were the instruments, prepared the way for the revolution that was effected two years afterwards by Bonaparte himself, when it appeared not at all strange, that a military chief should have recourse to a measure in which magistrates had indulged themselves.

The Directors, however, entertained no apprehensions of the inevitable consequences of the resolution which they adopted; their situation was dangerous, they had, as I have endeavoured to show, too much arbitrary power, and too little legal power. They had been invested

with all the means of persecution which excite hatred, but with none of the constitutional rights which would have enabled them to defend themselves. At the moment when the second third of the Chambers was renewed by the election of 1797, the public mind became a second time impatient to remove the conventionalists from the administration; but a second time also, instead of waiting a year, during which the majority of the Directory would have been changed, and the last third of the Chambers chosen afresh, the French vivacity urged the enemies of the government to endeavour to overturn it without delay. The opposition to the Directory was not at first formed by pure royalists; but they gradually mingled themselves with it. Besides, in civil dissensions, men always end by adopting the opinions of which they are accused; and the party which attacked the Directory was thus powerfully impelled to a counter-revolution.

In every quarter a spirit of violent re-action appeared: at Lyons, at Marseilles, assassinations took place: the victims, it is true, were men covered with guilt; still it was assassination. The journals, in their daily proclamations of vengeance, armed themselves with calumny, and announced openly a counter-revolution. In the

interior, as abroad, there were two projects;—one party was resolved to bring back the old regime, and General Pichegru was one of their principal instruments.

The Directory, as preserver of its own political existence, had strong reasons for putting itself in a state of defence; but how could it? The defects in the constitution which M. Necker had so well pointed out, rendered it very difficult for the government to make a legal resistance to the attacks of the councils. The Council of Ancients was inclined to defend the Directors, only because it occupied, though very imperfectly, the place of a chamber of peers; but as the deputies of this council were not named for life, they were afraid of rendering themselves unpopular by supporting magistrates whom the public opinion rejected. If the government had possessed the right of dissolving the Five Hundred, the mere threat of exerting this prerogative would have restrained them within bounds. In short, if the executive power had been able to oppose even a suspending *veto* to the decrees of the councils, it would have been satisfied with the means with which the law had armed it for its protection. But these very magistrates, whose authority was so limited, had great power as a

revolutionary faction; and they were not scrupulous enough to confine themselves to the rules of constitutional warfare, when, to get rid of their opponents, they needed only to have recourse to violence. The personal interest of some individuals was seen on this occasion, as it always will be, to overturn the barriers of the law, if these barriers are not constructed in such a way as to maintain themselves.

Two directors, Barthélemy and Carnot, were on the side of the representative councils. Carnot certainly was not suspected of desiring the restoration of the old regime; but he was unwilling (and the reluctance does him honour) to adopt illegal means in order to repel the attack of the legislative power. The majority of the Directory, Rewbell, Barras, and Lareveillere, hesitated some time between two auxiliaries who were equally at their disposal,—the Jacobins, and the army. They justly feared the former; the terrorists were still a dangerous weapon, which might overthrow him who should venture to make use of it. The Directors believed, therefore, that it was better to obtain addresses from the armies, and to request General Bonaparte, who of all the commanders in chief declared himself then most strongly against the councils, to send one of his generals of bri-

gade to Paris, to await the orders of the Directory. Bonaparte chose General Augereau, a man very decided in action, and not very capable of reasoning—two qualities which rendered him an excellent instrument of despotism, provided this despotism assumed the name of revolution.

By a singular contrast, the royalists in the two councils appealed to republican principles, to the liberty of the press, to the liberty of suffrages, to every liberty in short, and particularly to the liberty of subverting the Directory. The popular party, on the contrary, grounded itself always on circumstances, and defended the revolutionary measures which served as a momentary security to the government. The republicans found themselves constrained to disavow their own principles, because they were turned against themselves; and the royalists borrowed the weapons of the republicans to attack the republic. This strange combination of arms exchanged in the combat has been exhibited in other circumstances. Every minority invokes justice, and justice is liberty. A party can be judged of only by the doctrine which it professes when it is the strongest.

Nevertheless, when the Directory took the fatal resolution of sending the grenadiers to

seize the legislators in their seats, it had no longer need of the mischief which it resolved to do. The change of ministry, and the addresses of the armies, were sufficient to restrain the royalists; and the Directory ruined itself by pushing its triumph too far. For it was so contrary to the spirit of a republic to employ the soldiery against the representatives of the people, that the state could not fail to be destroyed in the very attempt to save it by such means. On the evening of the fatal day every one knew that a great blow was on the point of being struck; for in France men conspire in the public streets, or rather they do not conspire, but excite one another, so that he who can listen to what is said will know beforehand what is about to be done.

On the night before the entrance of General Augereau into the councils, the alarm was such, that the greater number of persons of note left their houses from the fear of being arrested in them. One of my friends found an asylum for me in a small chamber, which looked upon the bridge of Louis XVI. I there spent the night in beholding the preparations for the awful scene which was to take place in a few hours; none but soldiers appeared in the streets; all the citizens remained in their homes.

The cannon, which were brought to surround the palace where the legislative body assembled, were rolling along the pavements; but, except their noise, all was silence. No hostile assemblage was seen any where, nor was it known against whom all this apparatus was directed. Liberty was the only power vanquished in that fatal struggle; it might have been said that she was seen to fly, like a wandering spirit, at the approach of the day which was to shine upon her destruction.

In the morning it was known that General Augereau had conducted his battalions into the Council of the Five Hundred, that he had arrested several of the deputies who were found there assembled in a committee, and that General Pichegru was president at the time. Astonishment was excited by the little respect which the soldiers showed for a general who had so often led them to victory; but he had been successfully characterized as a counter-revolutionist, a name, which, when the public opinion is free, exercises in France a kind of magical power. Besides, Pichegru had no means of producing an effect on the imagination; he was a man of good manners, but without striking expression either in his features or in his words; the recollection of his victories did not

hover around him, for there was nothing in his appearance that announced them. It has often been said, that he was guided in war by the counsels of another: I know not what truth there may have been in this, but it is at least credible; for his look and conversation were so dull, that they suggested no idea of his being fit for becoming the leader of any enterprise. Nevertheless, his courage and political perseverance, as well as his misfortunes, have since awakened a deserved interest in his fate.

Some members of the Council of the Ancients, with the intrepid and generous old man Dupont de Nemours, and the respectable Barbé-Marbois, at their head, repaired on foot to their hall of sitting, and, after having ascertained that the door was shut against them, returned in the same way, in the middle of soldiers drawn up in line; while the people, who were looking on, seemed scarcely to be aware, that it was the cause of their representatives, oppressed by an armed force, which was at stake. The fear of a counter-revolution had unfortunately disorganized the public mind: no one knew where to find the cause of liberty, between those who disgraced her and those who were accused of hating her. The most honourable men, Barbé-Marbois, Tronçon-Ducoudray, Camille Jordan,

&c. were condemned to transportation beyond sea. Atrocious measures followed this first violation of all justice. The public debt was diminished by two-thirds, and this operation was distinguished by a phrase (*la mobiliser*) expressive merely of change and fluctuation: so dexterous are the French at inventing terms with a gentle sound for the harshest proceedings. The priests and the nobles were again proscribed with unrelenting barbarity. The liberty of the press was abolished, as irreconcileable with the exercise of arbitrary power. The invasion of Switzerland, the mad project of a descent upon England, removed every hope of peace with Europe. The revolutionary spirit was conjured up, but it re-appeared without the enthusiasm which once animated it; and, as the civil authority did not rest upon justice, upon magnanimity, in short, upon any of the great qualities which ought to characterize it, the ardour of patriotism turned itself towards military glory, which then at least satisfied the imagination.

CHAPTER XXV.

Private Anecdotes.

IT is painful to speak of one's self, at a time especially when the most important narratives alone demand the attention of readers. Yet I cannot abstain from refuting an accusation which is injurious to me. The journals, whose office it was in 1797 to insult all the friends of liberty, have pretended that, from a predilection for a republic, I approved of the affair of the 18th Fructidor. I certainly would not have counselled, had I been called upon to give advice, the establishment of a republic in France; but, when it once existed, I was not of opinion that it ought to be overturned. Republican government, considered abstractedly and without reference to a great state, merits the respect which it has ever inspired; the revolution of the 18th Fructidor, on the contrary, must always excite horror, both by the tyrannical principles from which it proceeded, and by the frightful results which were its necessary consequence. Among the individuals, of whom

the Directory was composed, I knew only Barras; and, far from having the slightest influence with the others, though they could not be ignorant of my fond love of liberty, they were so dissatisfied with my attachment to the proscribed, that they gave orders upon the frontiers of Switzerland, at Versoix near Coppet, to arrest me, and conduct me to prison at Paris; on account, said they, of my efforts to obtain the restoration of the emigrants. Barras defended me with warmth and generosity; and it was he who some time afterwards obtained permission for me to return to France. The gratitude which I owed him kept up the relations of society between us.

M. de Talleyrand had returned from America a year before the 18th Fructidor. The well-disposed part of the nation were in general desirous of peace with Europe, which was then inclined to treat; and it was thought that M. de Talleyrand could not but be, what he has been always since found, a very able negotiator. The friends of liberty wished that the Directory should strengthen itself by constitutional measures, and that with this view they should choose ministers calculated to support the government. M. de Talleyrand seemed then the best possible choice for the department of foreign affairs, and

he much wished to accept it. I served him effectually in this respect by procuring for him an introduction to Barras, through one of my friends, and by strongly recommending him. M. de Talleyrand wanted aid to arrive at power; but, once there, he required not the assistance of others to maintain him in it. His appointment is the only share which I had in the crisis which preceded the 18th Fructidor; and what I did tended, in my opinion, to prevent that catastrophe; for there was reason to hope that M. de Talleyrand might effect a reconciliation between the two parties. Since that time I have not had the slightest connexion with the various aspects of his political career.

After the 18th Fructidor the proscription extended itself on every side; and the nation, which, under the reign of terror, had already lost the most respectable men, saw itself every day deprived of some of those who remained. Dupont de Nemours, the most chivalrous champion of liberty in France, but who could not recognize it in the dispersion of the representatives of the people by an armed force, was on the point of being proscribed. I was informed of his danger, and I immediately sent in quest of Chenier the poet, who, two years before, had, at my desire, made the speech

to which M. de Talleyrand was indebted for his recall. Chenier, in spite of all that may be said against his life, was susceptible of emotion; for he had talent, and dramatic talent. He was moved by the picture of the situation of Dupont de Nemours and his family, and ran to the tribune, where he succeeded in saving him, by making him pass for a man of eighty years of age, though he was scarcely sixty. This artifice was not agreeable to the pleasing Dupont de Nemours, who, so far as the mind was concerned, had always strong claims to youth.

Chenier was a man at once violent and timid; full of prejudices, though an enthusiastic admirer of philosophy; inaccessible to reasoning, when it combated his passions, which he reverenced as his household gods. He walked up and down his chamber with great strides; answered without having listened; grew pale and trembled with passion, when a word, disagreeable to him, struck his ear by itself, for want of patience to hear the remainder of the phrase. He was nevertheless a man of talent and imagination; but so much under the influence of self-love, that he was astonished at what he was, instead of labouring to attain a higher perfection.

Every day increased the alarm of the good. An observation of a general, who accused me publicly of pity for the conspirators, induced me to quit Paris and withdraw to the country; for, in political conjunctures, pity is called treason. I went therefore to the house of a friend, where, by a singular chance, I met one of the most illustrious and bravest royalists of La Vendée, the Prince de la Trémoille, who, though a price was set upon his head, had come with the hope of turning circumstances to the advantage of his cause. I wished to resign to him an asylum, of which he had more need than I; he refused my offer, and proposed to withdraw from France, since all hope of a counter-revolution was at an end. We were justly surprised that the same blast should have reached us both, since our preceding situations had been very different.

I returned to Paris: every day made us tremble for some new victims, who were involved in the general persecution that was carried on against emigrants and priests. The Marquis d'Ambert, who had been Bernadotte's colonel previous to the Revolution, was taken and brought before a military commission;—a terrible tribunal, the existence of which, but of the army, is sufficient to prove the tyranny of

the government. Bernadotte sought the Directors, and asked of them, as the sole reward of all his services, the pardon of his colonel; they were inflexible; they gave the name of justice to an equal distribution of misery.

Two days after the punishment of M. d'Ambert, the brother of M. de Norvins de Monbreton, whom I had known in Switzerland during his emigration, entered my chamber at ten o'clock in the morning. He told me, with great agitation, that his brother was arrested, and that the military commission was assembled to sentence him to death; he asked me, whether I could find any means of saving him. How could I flatter myself with the hope of obtaining a favour from the Directory, when the prayers of General Bernadotte had been fruitless; and yet, how could I resolve to make no attempt in behalf of a man, with whom I was acquainted, and who in two hours would be shot, if nobody came to his assistance? I suddenly recollected that I had seen, at the house of Barras, a General Lemoine, the same whom I have mentioned on the occasion of the Quiberon expedition, and that he had appeared to take pleasure in conversing with me. This General commanded the division of Paris, and had a right to suspend the judgments of the military

commission established in that city. I thanked Heaven for the idea, and instantly set out, with the brother of the unfortunate Norvins: we entered together the chamber of the General, who was very much surprised to see me. He began by making apologies to me for his morning toilette, and his apartment; in short, I was unable to prevent him from continually returning to the language of politeness, although I implored him not to waste an instant on it, for that instant might be irrecoverable. I hastened to tell him the reason of my visit; and, at first, he abruptly refused me. My heart throbbed at the sight of that brother who might think that I was not employing the words best fitted to obtain what I asked. I began my solicitations afresh, collecting myself, that I might assemble all my strength; I was afraid of saying too much or too little; of losing the fatal hour, after which all would be over; or of neglecting an argument which might be successful. I looked by turns at the clock and at the General, to see which of the two powers, his soul or time, approached the term most quickly. Twice the General took the pen to sign the reprieve, and twice the fear of committing himself restrained him; at last he was unable to refuse us, and may Heaven shower blessings on him for his

compliance. He delivered the redeeming paper, and M. de Monbreton ran to the tribunal, where he learned that his brother had already acknowledged every thing; but the reprieve broke up the sitting, and innocence survived.

It is the duty of us women at all times to aid individuals accused of political opinions of any kind whatsoever; for what are opinions in times of faction? Can we be certain that such and such events, such and such a situation, would not have changed our own views? and, if we except a few invariable sentiments, who knows how difference of situation might have acted on us?

CHAPTER XXVI.

Treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. *Arrival of General Bonaparte at Paris.*

THE Directory was disinclined to peace, not that it wished to extend the French dominions beyond the Rhine and the Alps, but because it thought the war useful for the propagation of the republican system. Its plan was to surround France with a belt of republics, like those of Holland, Switzerland, Piedmont, Lombardy, Genoa. Every where it established a directory, two councils, a constitution, in short, similar in every respect to that of France. It is one of the great failings of the French, and a consequence of their social habits, that they imitate one another, and wish to be imitated by every body. They take natural varieties in each man's, or even each nation's mode of thinking, for a spirit of hostility against themselves.

General Bonaparte was assuredly less serious and less sincere than the Directory in the love of republicanism; but he had much more sagacity in appreciating circumstances.

He foresaw that peace would be popular in France, because the passions were subsiding into tranquillity, and the people were becoming weary of sacrifices; he therefore signed the treaty of Campo Formio with Austria. But this treaty contained the surrender of the Venetian Republic; and it is not easy to conceive, how he succeeded in prevailing upon the Directory, which yet was in some respects republican, to commit what, according to its own principles, was the greatest possible enormity. From the date of this proceeding, not less arbitrary than the partition of Poland, there no longer existed in the government of France the slightest respect for any political doctrine, and the reign of one man began, when the dominion of principle was at an end.

Bonaparte made himself remarkable by his character and capacity as much as by his victories, and the imagination of the French was beginning to attach itself warmly to him. His proclamations to the Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics were quoted. In the one this phrase was remarked; *You were divided, and bent down by tyranny; you were not in a situation to conquer liberty.* In the other, *True conquests, the only conquests which cost no regret, are those which we make from ignorance.* In his style there

reigned a spirit of moderation and dignity, which formed a contrast with the revolutionary bitterness of the civil leaders of France. The warrior then spoke like a magistrate, while magistrates expressed themselves with military violence. Bonaparte in his army had not enforced the laws against emigrants. He was said to be much attached to his wife, whose character was full of gentleness; it was asserted that he was feelingly alive to the beauties of Ossian; people took delight in ascribing to him all the generous qualities which give a pleasing relief to extraordinary talents. Besides, the nation was so weary of oppressors who borrowed the name of liberty, and of oppressed persons who regretted the loss of arbitrary power, that admiration knew not what to attach itself to, and Bonaparte seemed to unite all that was fitted to take it captive.

It was with this sentiment, at least, that I saw him for the first time at Paris. I could not find words to reply to him, when he came to me to say, that he had sought my father at Coppet, and that he regretted having passed into Switzerland without seeing him. But, when I was a little recovered from the confusion of admiration, a strongly marked sentiment of fear succeeded. Bonaparte, at that

time, had no power; he was even believed to be not a little threatened by the captious suspicions of the Directory; so that the fear which he inspired was caused only by the singular effect of his person upon nearly all who approached him. I had seen men highly worthy of esteem; I had likewise seen monsters of ferocity: there was nothing in the effect which Bonaparte produced on me, that could bring back to my recollection either the one or the other. I soon perceived, in the different opportunities which I had of meeting him during his stay at Paris, that his character could not be defined by the words which we commonly use; he was neither good, nor violent, nor gentle, nor cruel, after the manner of individuals of whom we have any knowledge. Such a being had no fellow, and therefore could neither feel nor excite sympathy: he was more or less than man. His cast of character, his understanding, his language, were stamped with the impress of an unknown nature;—an additional advantage, as we have elsewhere observed, for the subjugation of Frenchmen.

Far from recovering my confidence by seeing Bonaparte more frequently, he constantly intimidated me more and more. I had a confused feeling that no emotion of the heart could act

upon him. He regards a human being as an action or a thing, not as a fellow-creature. He does not hate more than he loves; for him nothing exists but himself; all other creatures are cyphers. The force of his will consists in the impossibility of disturbing the calculations of his egotism; he is an able chess-player, and the human race is the opponent to whom he proposes to give check-mate. His successes depend as much on the qualities in which he is deficient as on the talents which he possesses. Neither pity, nor allurement, nor religion, nor attachment to any idea whatsoever, could turn him aside from his principal direction. He is for his self-interest what the just man should be for virtue; if the end were good, his perseverance would be noble.

Every time that I heard him speak, I was struck with his superiority; yet it had no similitude to that of men instructed and cultivated by study or society, such as those of whom France and England can furnish examples. But his discourse indicated a fine perception of circumstances, such as the sportsman has of the game which he pursues. Sometimes he related the political and military events of his life in a very interesting manner; he had even somewhat of Italian imagination in narratives which

allowed of gaiety. Yet nothing could triumph over my invincible aversion for what I perceived in him. I felt in his soul a cold sharp-edged sword, which froze the wound that it inflicted; I perceived in his understanding a profound irony, from which nothing great or beautiful, not even his own glory could escape; for he despised the nation whose suffrages he wished, and no spark of enthusiasm was mingled with his desire of astonishing the human race.

It was in the interval between the return of Bonaparte and his departure for Egypt, that is to say, about the end of 1797, that I saw him several times at Paris; and never could I dissipate the difficulty of breathing which I experienced in his presence. I was one day at table between him and the Abbé Sieyes;—a singular situation, if I had been able to foresee what afterwards happened. I examined the figure of Bonaparte with attention; but whenever he discovered that my looks were fixed upon him, he had the art of taking away all expression from his eyes, as if they had been turned into marble. His countenance was then immoveable, except a vague smile which his lips assumed at random, to mislead any one who might wish to observe the external signs of what was passing within.

The Abbé Sieyes conversed during dinner, unaffectedly and fluently, as suited a mind of his degree of strength. He expressed himself concerning my father with a sincere esteem. *He is the only man*, said he, *who has ever united the most perfect precision in the calculations of a great financier to the imagination of a poet.* This eulogium pleased me, because it characterized him. Bonaparte, who heard it, also said some obliging things concerning my father and me, but like a man who takes no interest in individuals whom he cannot make use of in the accomplishment of his own ends.

His figure, at that time thin and pale, was rather agreeable; he has since grown fat, which does not become him; for we can scarcely tolerate a character which inflicts so many sufferings on others, if we do not believe it to be a torment to the person himself. As his stature is short, and his waist very long, he appeared to much more advantage on horseback than on foot. In every respect it is war, and only war, which suits him. His manners in society are constrained, without timidity; he has an air of vulgarity when he is at his ease, and of disdain when he is not: disdain suits him best, and accordingly he indulges in it without scruple.

By a natural vocation to the regal office, he

already addressed trifling questions to all who were presented to him. Are you married? was his question to one of the guests. How many children have you? said he to another. How long is it since you arrived? When do you set out? and other interrogations of a similar kind, which establish the superiority of him who puts them over those who submit to be thus questioned. He already took delight in the art of embarrassing, by saying disagreeable things;—an art which he has since reduced into a system, as he has every other mode of subjugating men by degrading them. At this epoch, however, he had a desire to please, for he confined to his own thoughts the project of overturning the Directory, and substituting himself in its stead; but in spite of this desire, one would have said that, unlike the prophet, he cursed involuntarily, though he intended to bless.

I saw him one day approach a French lady distinguished for her beauty, her wit, and the ardour of her opinions. He placed himself straight before her, like the stiffest of the German generals, and said to her, "*Madam, I don't like women to meddle with politics.*" "*You are right, General,*" replied she; "*but in a country where they lose their heads, it is natural for them to desire to know the reason.*" Bona-

parte made no answer. He is a man who is calmed by an effective resistance; those who have borne his despotism deserve to be accused as much as he himself.

The Directory gave General Bonaparte a solemn reception, which in several respects should be considered as one of the most important epochs in the history of the Revolution. The court of the palace of the Luxembourg was chosen for this ceremony. No hall would have been large enough to contain the multitude which it attracted: all the windows, and all the roofs, were crowded with spectators. The five Directors, in Roman costume, were seated on a platform at the further end of the court, and near them the deputies of the two councils, the tribunals, and the institute. Had this spectacle occurred before the subjugation of the national representation to military power on the 18th Fructidor, it would have exhibited an air of grandeur: patriotic tunes were played by an excellent band; banners served as a canopy to the Directors, and these banners brought back the recollection of great victories.

Bonaparte arrived, dressed very simply, followed by his aides-de-camp, all taller than himself, but nearly bent by the respect which they displayed to him. In the presence of whatever

was most distinguished in France, the victorious General was covered with applauses: he was the hope of every one: republicans, royalists, all saw the present or the future in the support of his powerful hand. Alas! of the young men who then cried *Long live Bonaparte*, how many has his insatiable ambition left alive?

M. de Talleyrand, in presenting Bonaparte to the Directory, called him *the liberator of Italy, and the pacificator of the Continent.* He assured them, that *General Bonaparte detested luxury and splendour, the miserable ambition of vulgar souls, and that he loved the poems of Ossian, particularly because they detach us from the earth.* The earth would have required nothing better, I think, than to let him detach himself from its concerns. Bonaparte himself then spoke with a sort of affected negligence, as if he had wished to intimate, that he bore little love to the government under which he was called to serve.

He said that for twenty centuries royalty and feudality had governed the world, and that the peace which he had just concluded was the era of republican government. *When the happiness of the French,* said he, *shall be established upon better organical laws, all Europe will be free.* I know not whether by the organical laws of

freedom he meant the establishment of his absolute power. However that might be, Barras, at that time his friend and president of the Directory, made a reply which supposed him to be sincere in all that he had just said, and concluded by charging him specially with the conquest of England, a mission rather difficult.

On every side the hymn was sung which Chenier had composed to celebrate this day. The last stanza of it anticipates the long period of tranquil renown to which France might now look forward. It is as follows:

Contemplez nos lauriers civiques!
L'Italie a produit ces fertiles moissons;
Ceux-là croissent pour nous au milieu des glaçons;
Voici ceux de Fleurus, ceux des plaines belgiques.
Tous les fleuves surpris nous ont vus triomphans;
Tous les jours nous furent prospères.
Que le front blanchi de nos pères
Soit couvert de lauriers cueillis par leurs enfans.
Tu fus long-temps l'effroi, sois l'honneur de la terre,
O république des François!
Que le chant des plaisirs succède aux cris de guerre,
La victoire a conquis la paix.

Alas! what is become of those days of glory and peace, with which France flattered herself twenty years ago! All these blessings were in the hand of a single man: what has he done with them?

CHAPTER XXVII.

Preparations of General Bonaparte for proceeding to Egypt. His Opinion on the Invasion of Switzerland.

BONAPARTE, at this same epoch, the close of 1797, sounded the public opinion with respect to the Directors; he saw that they were not loved, but that a republican sentiment made it impossible for a general to put himself in the place of the civil magistrates. He was one evening conversing with Barras upon his ascendency over the Italians, who had wished to make him king of Italy and Duke of Milan. *But*, said he, *I do not think of any thing of the sort in any country. You do well*, replied Barras, *not to think of it in France; for if the Directory were to send you to the Temple to-morrow, there would not be four persons who would oppose it.* Bonaparte was sitting on a couch by the side of Barras; at these words, unable to restrain his irritation, he sprung towards the fire-place: then, resuming that species of apparent tranquillity, of which the most passionate among

the inhabitants of the South are capable, he declared that he wished to be entrusted with a military expedition. The Directory proposed to him the invasion of England; he went to survey the coasts, and, as he soon perceived the extravagance of that project, he returned with the resolution of attempting the conquest of Egypt.

Bonaparte has always sought to lay hold of the imagination of men, and in this respect he knows well how they ought to be governed by one who is not born to a throne. An invasion of Africa, war carried into Egypt, a country almost fabulous, could not fail to make an impression on every mind. The French might easily be persuaded, that they would derive great advantage from such a colony in the Mediterranean, and that it might one day furnish them with the means of attacking the English establishments in India. These schemes possessed grandeur, and were fitted to augment the brilliant reputation of Bonaparte. Had he remained in France, the Directory, through all the journals which were at its nod, would have launched forth numberless calumnies, and tarnished his exploits in the imagination of the idle: Bonaparte would have been reduced to dust, before the thunderbolt struck

him. He was therefore right in wishing to make himself a poetical personage, instead of remaining exposed to the slanders of Jacobins, who, with their popular forms, are not less dextrous than courts in the propagation of scandal.

There was no money to transport an army to Egypt; and unmixed condemnation is due to Bonaparte's conduct in exciting the Directory to invade Switzerland, with a view to seize the treasury of Berne, which two hundred years of wisdom and economy had accumulated. The war had for its pretext the situation of the Pays de Vaud. There is no doubt, but that the Pays de Vaud was entitled to claim an independent existence, which it acted right in maintaining. But if the emigrants were blamed for uniting themselves to foreigners against France, should not the same principle be applied to the Swiss, who invoked the terrible assistance of the French? Besides, it was not the Pays de Vaud alone that was concerned in a war which would necessarily hazard the independence of all Switzerland. This cause appeared to me so sacred, that, at that time, I still thought it not altogether impossible to induce Bonaparte to defend it. In every circumstance of my life, the errors which I have committed in politics have proceeded from the idea that men were always

capable of being moved by truth, if it was presented to them with force.

I remained nearly an hour in conference with Bonaparte: he is a good and patient listener, for he wishes to know if what is said can throw any light on his own affairs: but Cicero and Demosthenes together would not draw him to the slightest sacrifice of personal interest. Many people of moderate capacity call that reason; it is reason of an inferior order; there is one more exalted, which does not proceed by mere calculation.

Bonaparte, in conversing with me on Switzerland, alleged the situation of the Pays de Vaud, as a motive for the entrance of the French troops. He told me, that the inhabitants of that district were subject to the aristocrats of Berne, and that men could not how exist without political rights. I moderated, as well as I could, this republican ardour, by representing to him that the Vaudois were perfectly free in every civil relation, and that when liberty exists in fact, it is unnecessary, for the sake of the abstract right, to expose ourselves to the greastest of misfortunes, that of seeing foreigners in our native land. "Self-love and imagination," replied the General, "make men cling to the advantage of sharing in the government of their

country, and there is injustice in excluding any portion of them from it." Nothing is more true in principle, said I, General; but it is equally true that it is by their own efforts that liberty should be obtained, and not by calling in the aid of a power which must be necessarily predominant. The word principle has since appeared very suspicious to Bonaparte, but it then suited him to make use of it, and he alleged it against me. I insisted anew upon the happiness and beauty of Switzerland, and the repose which she had for many centuries enjoyed. "Yes, without doubt," said Bonaparte, interrupting me, but men must have *political rights;* yes, repeated he, as if the words had been committed to memory, "*political rights.*" Then, changing the conversation, because he wished to hear no more upon the subject, he spoke to me of his love for retirement, for the country, and for the fine arts; and took the trouble of exhibiting himself to me in aspects suited to what he supposed to be the turn of my imagination.

The conversation, however, gave me some idea of the attractions which may be found in him when he assumes the air of a plain good-natured man, and speaks with simplicity of himself and his projects. This art, the most formidable of all, has captivated many. At this period

I still met Bonaparte occasionally in society; and he appeared to me always profoundly occupied with the relations which he wished to establish between himself and other men, keeping them at a distance, or bringing them near him, according as he thought he could attach them most securely. In particular, when he was with the Directors, he was afraid of appearing like a general under the orders of his government; and in his manners with that class of superiors, he tried alternately dignity and familiarity; but he missed the true tone of both. He is a man who can be natural only when he commands.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Invasion of Switzerland.

AS Switzerland was threatened with an approaching invasion, I quitted Paris in the month of January, 1798, to rejoin my father at Coppet. He was still on the list of emigrants, and a positive law condemned to death emigrants who remained in a country occupied by the French troops. I did my utmost to induce him to quit his abode; he would not: "*At my age,*" said he, "*a man should not wander upon the earth.*" I believe that his secret motive was his reluctance to remove himself from the tomb of my mother: on this subject he had a superstition of the heart, which he would have sacrificed only to the interest of his family, and never to his own. In the four years since the companion of his life had ceased to live, scarcely a day passed in which he did not go to walk near the tomb in which she reposes, and by departing he would have thought that he was abandoning her.

When the entry of the French was posi-

tively announced, my father and myself, with my young children, remained alone in the chateau of Coppet. On the day appointed for the violation of the Swiss territory, our inquisitive people went down to the bottom of the avenue; and my father and I, who were awaiting our fate together, placed ourselves in a balcony, that had a view of the high road by which the troops were to arrive. Though it was the middle of winter, the weather was delightful; the Alps were reflected in the lake; and the noise of the drum alone disturbed the tranquillity of the scene. My heart throbbed violently from the apprehension of what might menace my father. I knew that the Directory spoke of him with respect; but I knew also the empire of revolutionary laws over those who had made them. At the moment when the French troops passed the frontier of the Helvetic confederation, I saw an officer quit his men to proceed towards our chateau. A mortal terror seized me; but what he said to us soon re-assured me. He was commissioned by the Directory to offer my father a safe-guard. This officer, since well known under the title of Marshal Suchet, conducted himself extremely well towards us; and his staff, whom he brought to my father's house the day after, followed his example.

It is impossible not to find among the French, in spite of the wrongs with which they may be justly reproached, a social spirit, which makes us live at our ease with them. Nevertheless this army, which had so well defended the independence of its own country, wished to conquer the whole of Switzerland, and to penetrate even into the mountains of the small cantons, where men of simplicity retained the old-fashioned treasure of their virtues and usages. Berne and other Swiss cities possessed without doubt unjust privileges, and old prejudices were mingled with the democracy of the small cantons; but was it by force that any amelioration was to be effected in the condition of a country, accustomed to acknowledge only the slow and progressive operation of time? The political institutions of Switzerland have, it is true, been improved in some respects, and up to these late times it might have been believed, that even the mediation of Bonaparte had removed some prejudices of the catholic cantons. But union and patriotic energy have lost much since the revolution. The Swiss are now accustomed to have recourse to foreigners, and to share in the political passions of other nations, while the only interest of Helvetia is to be peaceful, independent, and animated by a jealous dignity of spirit.

In 1797, there was a rumour of the resistance which Berne and the small democratical cantons would make to the threatened invasion. Then, for the first time in my life, I entertained wishes against the French; for the first time in my life I experienced the painful anguish of blaming my own country enough to desire the triumph of those who fought against it. Formerly, just before the battle of Granson, the Swiss prostrated themselves before God; their cruel enemies thought that they were about to surrender their arms; but they rose up, and were victorious. The small cantons in 1798, in their noble ignorance of the things of this world, sent their quota to Berne; these religious soldiers kneeled before the church, when they arrived in the public square. "*We do not dread*," said they, "*the armies of France; we are four hundred, and if that is not enough, we are ready to make four hundred more of our companions march to the assistance of our country.*" Who would not be touched by this great confidence in such feeble means! But the days of the three hundred Spartans were gone by: numbers were omnipotent; and individual devotedness struggled in vain against the resources of a great state, and the combination of tactics.

On the day of the first battle of the Swiss

with the French, though Coppet is thirty leagues from Berne, we heard, in the silence of the evening, the discharges of cannon, which were resounding far off among the echos of the mountains. We scarcely dared to breathe, that we might the better distinguish the mournful noise; and though every probability was in favour of the French, we had still a vague hope of some miracle in behalf of justice: but time alone is her all-powerful ally. The Swiss troops were defeated in pitched battle; the inhabitants, however, defended themselves long among their mountains; the women and children took up arms; priests were massacred at the foot of their altars. But there was in this small territory a national will, which the French were obliged to treat with consideration; nor did the lesser cantons ever accept the republic one and indivisible—that metaphysical present which the Directory offered at the cannon's mouth. It must be allowed, however, that there was in Switzerland a party for the unity of the republic, which could boast of very respectable names. The Directory never acquired any influence in the affairs of foreign nations, without being supported by some portion of the natives. But these men, however decided they might be in favour of liberty, always found it difficult to

maintain their popularity, because they had rallied round the overwhelming power of the French.

When Bonaparte was at the head of France, he made war to extend his empire; and that policy is easily understood. But although the Directory were desirous of obtaining possession of Switzerland as an advantageous military position, their principal aim was to extend the republican system in Europe. Now, how could they flatter themselves that they would succeed, by putting constraint on the opinion of people, especially of those, who, like the Swiss, were entitled to consider themselves as the oldest friends of freedom? Violence suits despotism alone; and, accordingly, it showed itself at last under its true name—that of a military chief: to this the tyrannical measures of the Directory were a prelude.

It was, likewise, by a series of these combinations, half abstract, and half positive, half revolutionary, and half diplomatic, that the Directory wished to unite Geneva to France. They here committed an act of injustice so much the more revolting, that it was in opposition to all the principles which they professed. They robbed a free state of its independence, in spite of the strongly declared wish of its

inhabitants; they annihilated completely the moral importance of a republic, the cradle of the reformation, which had produced more distinguished men than the largest province of France; the democratical party, in short, did what they would have deemed a crime even in their adversaries. In fact, what would not have been said of kings and aristocrats, who should have tried to deprive Geneva of its individual existence? For states, as well as men, have an individual existence. Did the French derive from their acquisition a gain equal to the loss which was occasioned to the general wealth of the human mind? And may not the fable of the goose that laid eggs of gold be applied to small independent states, which the greater are eager to occupy? Conquest destroys the very advantages of which she covets the possession.

My father, by the union of Geneva, found himself legally a Frenchman; he, who had always been so in his sentiments and in his career. To live in safety in Switzerland, at that time occupied by the armies of the Directory, it was necessary that he should obtain the erasure of his name from the list of emigrants. With this view he gave me a memorial to carry to Paris, which was a real

master-piece of dignity and logic. The Directory, after having read it, were unanimous in the resolution to erase M. Necker's name; and, although this was an act of the most obvious justice, it gave me so much pleasure that I shall always retain a grateful remembrance of it.

I then negotiated with the Directory for the payment of the two millions of livres, which my father had left deposited in the public treasury. The government acknowledged the debt, but offered payment out of the estates of the clergy, which my father refused: not that he meant thus to assume the colours of the party who consider the sale of that property illegal; but because he had never in any situation wished to make his opinions and interests coincide, that there might not be the possibility of the slightest doubt of his perfect impartiality.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of the Termination of the Directory.

AFTER the fatal blow, which, on the 18th Fructidor, the military force inflicted on the dignity of the representatives of the people, the Directory, as we have just seen, still maintained itself for two years, without any external change in its organization. But the vital principle which had animated it existed no more, and one might have said of it, as of the giant in Ariosto, that it still fought, forgetting that it was dead. The elections, the deliberations of the councils, presented nothing to excite interest; for the results were always known beforehand. The persecutions which were carried on against nobles and priests were no longer incited by popular hatred: the war had ceased to have an object, since the independence of France and the limit of the Rhine were secured. But, instead of attaching Europe to France, the Directors were already beginning the fatal work which Napoleon so cruelly completed; they inspired the neighbouring nations with as much

aversion to the French government as princes alone had at first experienced.

The Roman republic was proclaimed from the summit of the Capitol; but, in our days, the statues are the only republicans in Rome; and those must know little of the nature of enthusiasm, who imagine that, by counterfeiting it, they will cause it to spring up. The free consent of the people can alone give to political institutions a certain native and spontaneous beauty, a natural harmony which ensures their duration. The monstrous system of despotism in the means, under pretext of liberty in the end, produced nothing but governments depending upon springs, which required to be constantly repaired, and stopped the moment that they ceased to be put in motion by external impulse. Festivals were celebrated at Paris with Grecian costumes and antique cars: but there was no fixed principle in the soul; immorality alone made rapid progress on every side; for public opinion was neither a terror nor a recompense to any one.

A revolution had occurred in the interior of the Directory, as in the interior of a seraglio, in which the nation had taken no share. The men last chosen were so little worthy of respect, that France, quite weary of them, called with

loud cries for a military chief; for she would neither have the Jacobins, the remembrance of whom struck her with horror, nor a counter-revolution, which the arrogance of the emigrants rendered terrible.

The lawyers, who had been called in 1799 to the situation of Directors, exhibited there only the fooleries of authority, without the talents and the virtues which render it respectable; the facility with which, in the course of an evening, a Director assumed the airs of a Court, was truly singular; the part must be one not very difficult to play. Were Gohier, Moulins,—were the most obscure of mankind named Directors? on the following day they were occupied exclusively with themselves; they spoke to you of their health and of their family interests, as if they had been personages dear to the whole world. They were kept in this illusion by flatterers, who were partly people of fashion, and partly not; but who all prosecuted their trade of courtiers, by showing to their prince the most affecting solicitude with regard to every thing which could concern him, on condition of obtaining a short audience for some particular request. Such of these men as had any thing to reproach themselves with during the reign of terror, always retained a

remarkable sensibility on that subject. If you pronounced a single word which might connect itself with the recollection which disturbed them, they immediately related their history to you in the most minute detail, and quitted every thing to converse on it for hours together. Did you return to the affair on which you wished to converse with them,—they listened to you no longer. When an individual commits a political crime, the complexion of his life is always determined by that deed; his aim thenceforward either is to justify it, or to consign it to forgetfulness by the influence of power.

The nation, fatigued with this revolutionary tribe, was arrived at that period in political conjunctures where men believe that it is only under the authority of a single person that repose is to be found. Thus Cromwell governed England by offering the shelter of his despotism to men whose safety depended on the Revolution. It is impossible to deny, in some respects, the truth of what Bonaparte said afterwards; *I found the crown of France on the ground and picked it up;* but it was the French nation itself which required to be raised.

The Russians and Austrians had gained great

victories in Italy; factions were multiplying to an infinite number in the interior; and the kind of cracking which precedes the fall of a building was heard in the government. The first wish was that Joubert should put himself at the head of the state; he preferred the command of the troops, and, disdaining to survive the reverses of the French armies, died nobly by the hand of the enemy. The wishes of all would have pointed out Moreau as the first magistrate of the republic—a pre-eminence of which his virtues certainly made him worthy; but he perhaps felt that he had not enough of political talent for such a situation, and he preferred exposing himself to dangers rather than to business.

Among the other French Generals, scarcely any were known who were qualified for the civil career. One only, General Bernadotte, united, as the sequel has proved, the qualities of a statesman and of a distinguished soldier. But he was then wholly devoted to the republican party, which would no more approve the subversion of the republic, than the royalists approved the subversion of the throne. Bernadotte, therefore, as we shall relate in the following chapter, limited himself to the re-establishment of the armies while he was Minister

at War. No scruples whatever arrested Bonaparte's course: accordingly we shall see how he seized on the destinies of France, and in what manner he guided them.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

News from Egypt: Return of Bonaparte.

NOTHING was better calculated to produce a striking effect on the mind than the Egyptian war; and though the great naval victory gained by Nelson near Aboukir, had destroyed all its possible advantages, letters dated from Cairo, orders issuing from Alexandria to penetrate to Thebes, on the confines of Ethiopia, increased the reputation of a man, who was not now within sight, but who at a distance seemed an extraordinary phenomenon. He put at the head of his proclamations, *Bonaparte, Commander-in-chief, and Member of the National Institute;* whence it was concluded, that he was a friend to knowledge, and a protector of letters; but the security which he gave for these

qualities was not more firm than his profession of the Mahomedan faith, followed by his concordat with the Pope. He was already beginning to impose upon Europe by a system of juggling tricks, convinced, as he was, that the science of life consists merely in the manœuvres of egotism. Bonaparte is not a man only but also a system; and, if he were right, the human species would no longer be what God has made it. He ought therefore to be examined like a great problem, the solution of which is of importance to meditation throughout all ages.

Bonaparte, in reducing every thing to calculation, was sufficiently acquainted with that part of the nature of man which does not obey the will, to feel the necessity of acting upon the imagination; and his twofold dexterity consisted in the art of dazzling multitudes, and of corrupting individuals.

His conversation with the Mufti in the pyramid of the Cheops, could not fail to enchant the Parisians, for it united the two qualities by which they are most easily captivated; a certain kind of grandeur and of mockery together. The French like to be moved and to laugh at being moved: quackery is their delight, and they aid willingly in deceiving them-

selves, provided they be allowed, while they act as dupes, to show by some witticisms that they are not so.

Bonaparte, in the pyramid, made use of the Oriental style. "*Glory to Allah,*" said he, "*there is no true God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet. The bread stolen by the wicked turns into dust in his mouth.*" "*Thou hast spoken,*" said the Mufti, "*like the most learned of the Mullahs.*"—"*I can cause a chariot of fire to descend from Heaven,*" continued Bonaparte, "*and direct it upon the earth.*"—"*Thou art the mightiest Captain,*" replied the Mufti, "*whose hand the power of Mahomet hath armed;*" Mahomet however did not prevent Sir Sidney Smith from arresting by his brilliant valour the successes of Bonaparte at St. Jean-d'Acre.

When Napoleon, in 1805, was named king of Italy, he said to General Berthier, in one of those moments when he talked of every thing that he might try his ideas upon other people; "This Sidney Smith made fortune fail me at St. Jean-d'Acre; my purpose was to set out from Egypt, proceed to Constantinople, and arrive at Paris by marching back through Europe." This failure, however, made at the time a very decent appearance. Whatever

his regrets might be, gigantic like the enterprises which followed them, Bonaparte found means to make his reverses in Egypt pass for successes; and although his expedition had no other result than the ruin of the fleet, and the destruction of one of our finest armies, he was called the Conqueror of the East.

Bonaparte, availing himself with ability of the enthusiasm of the French for military glory, associated their self-love with his victories as well as with his defeats. He gradually took possession of the place which the revolution occupied in every head, and attached to his own name that national feeling, which had aggrandized France in the eyes of foreigners.

Two of his brothers, Lucien and Joseph, had seats in the Council of Five Hundred, and both in their different lines had enough of intellect and talent to be eminently useful to the General. They watched for him over the state of affairs, and, when the moment was come, they advised him to return to France. The armies had been beaten in Italy, and were for the most part disorganized through the misconduct of the administration. The Jacobins began to show themselves once more, the Directory was without reputation and without strength: Bonaparte received all this intelligence in Egypt,

and after some hours of solitary meditation, he resolved to set out. This rapid and certain perception of circumstances is precisely what distinguishes him, and opportunity has never offered itself to him in vain. It has been frequently repeated, that on departing then, he deserted his army. Doubtless, there is a species of exalted disinterestedness, which would not have allowed a warrior to separate himself thus from the men who had followed him, and whom he left in distress. But Bonaparte ran such risks in traversing the sea covered with English vessels; the design, which summoned him to France, was so bold, that it is absurd to treat his departure from Egypt as cowardice. Such a being must not be attacked with common declamations: every man, who has produced a great effect on other men, to be judged, should be examined thoroughly.

A reproach of a much graver nature is the total want of humanity which Bonaparte manifested in his Egyptian campaign. Whenever he found any advantage in cruelty, he indulged in it, and yet his despotism was not sanguinary. He had no more desire to shed blood, than a reasonable man has to spend money without need. But his ambition was, in his nomenclature, necessity; and when this ambition was con-

cerned, he did not for a moment allow himself to hesitate to sacrifice others to himself. What we call conscience was in his eyes only the poetical name of cozenage.

CHAPTER II.

Revolution of the 18th Brumaire.

IN the time which had elapsed since Bonaparte's brothers wrote to him in Egypt to advise his return, the face of affairs had undergone a singular change. General Bernadotte had been appointed Minister at War, and had in a few months restored the organization of the armies. His extreme activity repaired all the mischiefs which negligence had caused. One day, as he was reviewing the young men of Paris who were on the eve of marching to the scene of war: *My lads*, said he, *there are assuredly among you some great captains.* These simple words electrified their souls, by recalling to their remembrance one of the chief advantages of free institutions, the emulation which they excite in every class.

The English had made a descent on Holland, which had been already repulsed. The Prussians had been beaten at Zurich by Massena; the French armies had again begun to act on

the offensive in Italy. Thus, when Bonaparte returned, Switzerland, Holland, and Piedmont were still under the control of France; the barrier of the Rhine, gained by the conquests of the Republic, was not disputed with her, and her force was on a balance with that of the other states of Europe. Who could have imagined then, that of all the combinations which fortune presented to her choice, that which would lead her to be conquered and subdued, was to raise the ablest of her generals to supreme power. Tyranny annihilates even the military force, to which it sacrifices every thing.

It was no longer, therefore, external reverses which, in 1799, made France desire Bonaparte; but the fear which the Jacobins excited was a powerful aid to him. They were now without means, and their appearance was nothing more than that of a spectre which comes to stir the ashes: it was, however, enough to rekindle the hatred which they inspired, and the nation, flying from a phantom, precipitated itself into the arms of Bonaparte.

The President of the Directory had said on the 10th of August of the very year in which Bonaparte was made Consul; *Royalty will never raise its head again; no longer will those*

men be seen who pretended to be the delegates of heaven that they might oppress the earth with more security; in whose eyes France was but their patrimony, Frenchmen but their subjects, and the laws the mere expression of their good pleasure. What was to be seen no more, was, however, seen very soon; and what France wished in calling Bonaparte to the throne, peace and repose, was exactly what his character rejected, as an element in which he could not live.

When Cæsar overturned the Roman republic he had to combat Pompey and the most illustrious patricians of the age: Cicero and Cato contended against him: every where there was greatness arrayed in opposition to his. Bonaparte met with no adversaries whose names deserve to be mentioned. If the Directory had been in the fulness of its past force, it would have said, like Rewbell, when hints were given him that there was reason to apprehend that General Bonaparte would offer his resignation: *Very well, let us accept it, for the republic will never want a general to command its armies.* In fact, the circumstance, which had rendered the armies of the French Republic formidable till then, was, that they had no need of any particular man to command them. Liberty draws

forth in a great nation all the talents which circumstances require.

Exactly on the 18th Brumaire I arrived at Paris from Switzerland; and as I was changing horses some leagues from the city, I was informed that the Director Barras had just passed, on his way to his estate of Gros-bois, accompanied by *gens d'armes*. The postilions were relating the news of the day, and this popular mode of becoming acquainted with them gave them additional interest. It was the first time since the Revolution, that the name of an individual was heard in every mouth. Till then it was said,—the Constituent Assembly has done so and so, or the people, or the Convention; now there was no mention of any but this man, who was to be substituted for all, and leave the human race without a name; who was to engross renown to himself, and to exclude every existing creature from the possibility of acquiring a share of it.

The very evening of my arrival, I learned that during the five weeks which Bonaparte had spent at Paris since his return, he had been preparing the public mind for the Revolution, which had just taken place. Every faction had presented itself to him, and he had given hopes to all. He had told the Jacobins, that he

would save them from the return of the old dynasty; he had, on the contrary, suffered the royalists to flatter themselves that he would re-establish the Bourbons; he had insinuated to Sieyes that he would give him an opportunity of bringing forth into light the constitution which he had been keeping in darkness for ten years; he had, above all, captivated the public, which belongs to no faction, by general protestations of love of order and tranquillity. Mention was made to him of a woman, whose papers the Directory had caused to be seized; he exclaimed on the absurd atrocity of tormenting women, he, who, according to his caprice, has condemned so many of them to unlimited exile: he spoke only of peace, he who has introduced eternal war into the world. In short, there was in his manner an affectation of gentleness, which formed an odious contrast with what was known of his violence. But, after ten years of suffering, enthusiastic attachment to notions had given way in revolutionary characters to personal hopes and fears. After a certain time old notions return; but the generation, which has had a share in great civil troubles, is scarcely ever capable of establishing freedom: it is too polluted for the accomplishment of so pure a work.

The French Revolution, after the 18th Fructidor, had been nothing but a continued succession of men who caused their own ruin by preferring their interest to their duty; they thus, at least, gave an important lesson to their successors.

Bonaparte met no obstacles in his way to power. Moreau was not enterprising in civil affairs; Bernadotte eagerly requested the Directors to re-appoint him Minister at War. His appointment was written out, but they had not courage to sign it. Nearly all the military men, therefore, rallied round Bonaparte; for, now that they interfered once more in the internal revolutions, they were resolved to place one of their own body at the head of the state, that they might thus secure to themselves the rewards which they wished to obtain.

An article of the constitution, which allowed the Council of Ancients to transfer the Legislative Body to another city than Paris, was the means employed to effect the overthrow of the Directory. The Council of Ancients ordained on the 18th Brumaire, that the Legislative Body and Council of Five Hundred should, on the following day, remove to Saint Cloud, where the troops might be made to act more easily. On the evening of

the 18th the whole city was agitated by the expectation of the great day that was to follow; and without doubt, apprehension of the return of the Jacobins made the majority of people of respectability wish at the time, that Bonaparte might have the advantage. My own feelings, I acknowledge, were of a very mixed nature. When the struggle was once begun, a momentary victory of the Jacobins might occasion fresh scenes of blood; yet I experienced, at the idea of Bonaparte's triumph, a grief which might be called prophetic.

A friend of mine who was present at the sitting in St. Cloud, dispatched messengers to me every hour: at one time he informed me that the Jacobins were on the point of prevailing, and I prepared to quit France anew: the instant afterwards I learned that the soldiers had dispersed the national representatives, and that Bonaparte had triumphed. I wept, not over liberty, for it never existed in France, but over the hope of that liberty, without which France can look for nothing but disgrace and misery. I felt within me at this instant a difficulty of breathing, which, I believe, has since become the malady of all those who lived under the authority of Bonaparte.

Different accounts have been given of the

manner in which the revolution of the 18th Brumaire was accomplished. The point of chief importance is, to observe on this occasion the characteristical traits of the man, who has been for nearly fifteen years the master of the continent of Europe. He repaired to the bar of the Council of Ancients, and wished to draw them into his views by addressing them with warmth and dignity: but he cannot express himself in connected discourse; it is only in conversation that his keen and decisive spirit shows itself to advantage. Besides, as he has no true enthusiasm on any subject, he is never eloquent but in abuse, and nothing was more difficult for him, than to confine himself in his address to that kind of respect which is due to an assembly whom we wish to convince. He attempted to say to the Council of Ancients, "*I am the God of War and of Fortune, follow me.*" But he used these pompous words from mere embarrassment, and in their place would rather have said, "*You are all a pack of wretches, and I will have you shot, if you do not obey me.*"

On the 19th Brumaire he came to the Council of Five Hundred, his arms crossed, with a very gloomy air, and followed by two tall grenadiers, who protected the shortness of his stature. The deputies, who were named Jacobins,

uttered violent exclamations when they saw him enter the hall: fortunately for him his brother Lucien was president at the time; it was in vain that he rang the bell to re-establish order; cries of traitor and usurper resounded from every quarter; and one of the members, a countryman of Bonaparte, the Corsican Arena, approached the general, and shook him violently by the collar of his coat. It has been supposed, but without reason, that he had a poignard to kill him. His action, however, terrified Bonaparte, who said to the grenadiers by his side, as he let his head drop over the shoulder of one of them, "*Get me out of this.*" The grenadiers carried him away from among the deputies who surrounded him, and bore him from the hall into the open air. He was no sooner out, than his presence of mind returned. He instantly mounted on horseback, and passing along the ranks of his grenadiers, soon determined them to what he wished should be done.

In this situation, as in many others, it has been observed that Bonaparte could be thrown into confusion, when another danger than that of war was set before him, whence some persons have ridiculously enough inferred that he was deficient in courage. His hardihood surely can-

not be denied; but as he is nothing, not even brave, in a generous manner, it follows that he never exposes himself, but when it may be advantageous. He would be much vexed at the prospect of being killed, for that would be a reverse, and he wishes to be successful in every thing; he would likewise be vexed at it, because death is disagreeable to the imagination: but he does not hesitate to hazard his life, when, according to his views, the game, if I may be allowed the expression, is worth the risk of the stake.

After General Bonaparte left the hall of the Five Hundred, the deputies opposed to him were vehement in demanding, that he should be put out of the protection of the law; and it was then that his brother Lucien, president of the Assembly, did him an eminent service by refusing, in spite of all the solicitations with which he was urged, to put that proposition to the vote. If he had consented, the decree would have passed, and no one can tell what impression it might yet have produced on the soldiers. For ten years they had uniformly abandoned such of their generals as the legislative power had proscribed; and although the national representation had lost its character of legality by the 18th Fructidor, the similarity of words often prevails over the diversity of things.

Bonaparte hastened to send an armed force to bring Lucien in safety out of the hall; as soon as he was gone, the grenadiers entered the orangery, where the deputies were assembled, and drove them away by marching from one extremity of the hall to the other, as if there had been nobody present. The deputies, driven against the wall, were forced to escape by the window into the gardens of St. Cloud with their senatorial robes. The representatives of the people had been already proscribed in France; but it was the first time since the Revolution, that the civil power had been rendered ridiculous in presence of the military; and Bonaparte, who wished to establish his dominion on the degradation of bodies as well as on that of individuals, enjoyed his success in destroying at the very outset the dignity of the deputies. From the moment that the moral force of the national representation was annihilated, a legislative body, whatever it might be, was in the eyes of the military a mere assemblage of five hundred men, much less strong and active than a battalion of the same number; and they have since been always ready at the command of their chief, to correct diversities of opinion like faults in discipline.

In the Committees of the Five Hundred,

Bonaparte, in presence of the officers of his suite and some friends of the Directory, made a speech, which was printed in the journals of the day. It contains a remarkable comparison, which history ought to store up. *What have they done*, said he, speaking of the Directors, *with that France which I left to them so brilliant. I left them peace, and I find war at my return; I left them victories, and I find defeats. What, in short, have they done with the hundred thousand Frenchmen, all of them my acquaintances and my companions in arms, who are now no more.* Then all at once concluding his harangue in a calm tone, he added, *This state of things cannot last; it would lead us in three years to despotism.* He took upon himself the charge of hastening the accomplishment of his prediction.

But would it not be an important lesson for the human species, if these Directors, unwarlike as they were, were to rise from their ashes, and were to demand of Napoleon to account for the barrier of the Rhine and the Alps conquered by the republic; for the two entries of foreign troops into Paris; for the three millions of Frenchmen who have perished from Cadiz to Moscow; and above all, for that sympathy which nations once felt with the cause of liberty in

France, and which is now changed into inveterate aversion? The Directors assuredly would not be the more praiseworthy for this; but the conclusion would be, that in our days an enlightened nation can do nothing worse than put itself into the hands of a single man. The public has now more sagacity than any individual; and institutions rally opinions more wisely than can be done by circumstances. If the French nation, instead of choosing that baneful foreigner, who has wrought for his own advantage, and wrought ill, even in that view;—if the French nation, at that time so imposing in spite of all her faults, had formed a constitution for herself, with a respectful attention to the lessons which ten years of experience had given her, she would still have been the light of the world.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Establishment of the Consular Constitution.

THE most potent charm which Bonaparte employed for the establishment of his power was, as we have said, the terror which the very name of Jacobinism inspired, although every person capable of reflection was aware that this pestilence could not revive in France. We willingly assume the air of fearing subdued factions to justify general measures of rigour. All who wish to favour the establishment of despotism are constantly endeavouring to keep the crimes of demagogues strongly in our recollection. It is a system of tactics which has little difficulty. Accordingly, Bonaparte paralyzed every kind of resistance to his will by these words: *Would you have me deliver you up to the Jacobins?* France bent before him, nor was there a man bold enough to reply, *We will combat both the Jacobins and you.* In fine, he was not loved, even at that time, but he was preferred: he has almost always presented himself simul-

taneously with some other source of alarm, which might cause his power to be accepted as the less evil of the two.

The task of discussing with Bonaparte the constitution which was to be proclaimed was entrusted to a commission of fifty members, selected from the Five Hundred and from the Ancients. Some of those members, who the evening before had leaped from a window to escape from the bayonets, treated seriously the abstract question of new laws, as if it had been possible to suppose that their authority was still respected. This coolness would have been noble, had it been joined to energy; but abstract questions were discussed, only that tyranny might be established; as, in Cromwell's days, passages of the Bible were sought out to justify absolute power.

Bonaparte allowed these men, accustomed to the tribune, to dissipate in words what remained to them of character; but when their theory approached too near to practice, he cut short every difficulty by a threat of interfering no more in their affairs, that is to say, of bringing them to a conclusion by force. He took considerable pleasure in these tedious discussions, because he is himself very fond of speaking. His species of dissimulation in politics is

not silence: he chooses rather to mislead by a perplexed discourse, which favours alternately the most opposite opinions. In truth, deceit is often practised more effectually by speaking than by silence. The least sign betrays those who say nothing; while, on the other hand, the impudence of active falsehood tends more directly to produce conviction. Bonaparte, therefore, lent himself to the subtleties of a committee, which discussed the establishment of a social system, like the composition of a book. There was then no question of ancient bodies to be treated with respect, of privileges to be preserved, or even of usages to be reverenced; the Revolution had so cleared away all recollections of the past from France, that the plan of the new constitution was not embarrassed by any remains of preceding edifices.

Fortunately for Bonaparte, in such a discussion there was no need of profound knowledge; he had only to combat reasonings, a species of weapon with which he played as he liked, and to which he opposed, when his convenience required, a logic in which nothing was intelligible except the declaration of his will. Some have believed that Bonaparte was well informed on every subject, because in this respect, as in many others, he made use of the tricks of

quackery. But, as he had read little in the course of his life, his knowledge was confined to what he had picked up in conversation. By accident he may speak to you on any subject whatsoever with exactness, and even with considerable science, if he has met some person who gave him information upon it immediately before; but the next instant you discover that he does not know what every well-educated person has learned in his youth. Doubtless much of a certain kind of talent—the talent of adroitness—is necessary to enable him thus to disguise his ignorance; but none, except men enlightened by sincere and regularly prosecuted studies, can entertain just ideas on the government of nations. The old doctrine of perfidy succeeded with Bonaparte, only because he added to it the delusions of victory. Without this fatal association, there would not have been two opinions concerning such a man.

The sittings of Bonaparte with his committee were related to us every evening, and the accounts might have amused, had they not thrown us into a deep melancholy as to the future lot of France. The servile spirit of courtiers began to unfold itself in the men, who had shown the greatest degree of revolutionary harshness. These ferocious Jacobins were re-

hearsing the parts of barons and counts, which were allotted to them afterwards; and every thing announced that their personal interest would be the true Proteus, which would assume at will the most different appearances.

During this discussion, I met a conventionalist whom I shall not name; for why give names where the truth of the picture does not require it? I expressed to him my alarms for liberty. "Oh! Madam," replied he, "we are come to such a point, that we must think of saving, not the principles of the Revolution, but the men who have been concerned in it." This wish assuredly was not that of France.

It was expected that Sieyes would present in a regular form that famous constitution which had been talked of for ten years, as the ark of alliance which was to unite all parties; but by a singular oddity, he had written nothing on the subject. Sieyes' superiority of talent could not prevail over the misanthropy of his character; he dislikes the human race, and cannot deal with it. One might say, that he would rather have to do with any other beings than men; and that he renounces all business, because he cannot find upon earth a species more to his taste. Bonaparte, who wasted his time neither in the contemplation of abstract ideas, nor in

the dejection of peevishness, perceived very quickly in what the system of Sieyes might be useful to him. It was in the very artful annihilation of popular elections. Sieyes substituted for them lists of candidates, out of which the Senate was to choose the members of the Legislative Body and of the Tribunate; for in that constitution there were, I know not for what reason, three bodies, and even four, if we reckon the Council of State, of which Bonaparte afterwards availed himself so well. When the choice of deputies is not made purely and directly by the people, the government is no longer representative; other institutions may accompany the privilege of election, but it is in that privilege that liberty consists. The important point therefore, for Bonaparte, was to paralize popular election, because he knew it to be irreconcileable with despotism.

In this constitution, the Tribunate, composed of a hundred persons, was to speak; while the Legislative Body, which consisted of two hundred and fifty members, was to be silent: but it is not easy to conceive why this permission was given to the one, or this constraint imposed upon the other. The Tribunate and the Legislative Body were not sufficiently numerous in proportion to the population of France; and

all political importance was concentrated in the Conservative Senate, which united all authority, but that which arises from independence of fortune. The senators had no resources except the appointments which they received from the executive power. The Senate was in effect nothing else than the mask of tyranny; it made the orders of an individual appear as if they had been discussed by many.

When Bonaparte was sure of having to deal only with men dependant on their salaries, who were divided into three bodies, and named by one another, he thought himself certain of attaining his end. The glorious name of tribune denoted a pension for five years; the noble appellation of senator meant a benefice for life; and he perceived quickly enough, that the one class would wish to acquire what the other would desire to preserve. Bonaparte communicated his will in different tones,—sometimes by the sage voice of the Senate, sometimes by the slavish cries of the Tribunes, sometimes by the still scrutiny of the Legislative Body: and this tripartite choir was reckoned the organ of the nation; though subject to the absolute control of a single master.

Sieyes' work was without doubt altered by Bonaparte. His long hawk-eyed-sight made

him descry and suppress whatever in the proposed institutions might, on a future day, occasion resistance: but Sieyes had ruined liberty, by providing any kind of substitute for popular election.

Bonaparte himself would not perhaps have been strong enough to effect at that time so great a change in generally admitted principles: it was necessary that the philosopher should here aid the designs of the usurper. Not assuredly that Sieyes wished to establish tyranny in France: justice requires us to admit, that he never took any share in it; and besides, a man of so much talent cannot love the authority of a single individual, unless that individual be himself. But he confused with his metaphysics the very simple question of elections; and it was under the shadow of the clouds thus raised, that Bonaparte passed on with impunity to despotism.

CHAPTER IV.

Progress of Bonaparte to Absolute Power.

THE first symptoms of tyranny cannot be watched too carefully: for when once it has grown up to a certain point, it can no longer be stopped in its career. A single man enchains the will of a multitude of individuals, the greater part of whom, taken separately, would wish to be free, but who nevertheless submit because they dread one another, and dare not communicate their thoughts freely. A minority not very numerous is often sufficient to resist in succession every portion of the majority which is unacquainted with its own strength.

In spite of the differences of time and place, there are points of resemblance in the history of all nations who have fallen under the yoke. It is generally after long civil troubles that tyranny is established, because it offers the hope of shelter to all the exhausted and timorous factions. Bonaparte said of himself with reason, that he could play admirably upon the instrument of power. In truth, as he is attached to

no principles, nor restrained by any obstacles, he presents himself in the arena of circumstances like a wrestler, no less supple than vigorous, and discovers at the first glance the points in every man or association of men, which may promote his private designs. His scheme for arriving at the dominion of France rested upon three principal bases,—to satisfy men's interests at the expense of their virtues, to deprave public opinion by sophisms, and to give the nation war for an object instead of liberty. We shall see him follow these different paths with uncommon ability. The French, alas! seconded him only too well: yet it is his fatal genius which should be chiefly blamed; for as an arbitrary government had at all times prevented the nation from acquiring fixed ideas upon any subject, Bonaparte set its passions in motion without having to struggle against its principles. He had it in his power to do honour to France, and to establish himself firmly by upright institutions: but his contempt of the human race had quite dried up his soul, and he believed that there was no depth but in the region of evil.

We have already seen him decree a constitution, in which there existed no securities. Besides, he took great care to leave the laws that had been published during the Revolution

unrepealed, that he might at his pleasure select from this accursed arsenal the weapon which suited him. The extraordinary commissions, the transportations, the banishments, the slavery of the press, measures unfortunately introduced in the name of liberty, were extremely useful to tyranny. When he employed them, he alleged as a pretext, sometimes reasons of state, sometimes the urgency of the conjuncture, sometimes the activity of his adversaries, sometimes the necessity of maintaining tranquillity. Such is the artillery of the phrases by which absolute power is defended, for circumstances never have an end; and in proportion as restraint by illegal measures is increased, the disaffected become more numerous, which serves to justify the necessity of new acts of injustice. The establishment of the sovereignty of law is always deferred till to-morrow, a vicious circle of reasoning which it is difficult to leave; for liberty will scarcely be permitted till that public spirit prevail which can result only from the enjoyment of liberty.

The constitution gave Bonaparte two colleagues: he chose with singular sagacity, for his assistant consuls, two men, who were of no use but to disguise the unity of his despotism: the one was Cambacérès, a lawyer of great

learning, who had been taught in the convention to bend methodically before terror; the other, Lebrun, a man of highly cultivated mind and highly polished manners, who had been trained under the Chancellor Maupeou, under that minister, who, satisfied with the degree of arbitrary power which he found in the monarchy as it then existed, had substituted for the parliaments of France one named by himself. Cambacérès was the interpreter of Bonaparte to the revolutionists, Lebrun to the royalists: both translated the same text into two different languages. Thus two able ministers were charged with the task of adapting the old system and the new to the mixed mass of the third. The one, a great noble who had been engaged in the Revolution, told the royalists, that it was their interest to recover monarchical institutions, at the expense of renouncing the ancient dynasty. The other, who, though a creature of the era of disaster, was ready to promote the re-establishment of courts, preached to the republicans the necessity of abandoning their political opinions, in order to preserve their places. Among these knights of *circumstances*, the grand master Bonaparte could create such conjunctures as he desired; while the others manœuvred according to the wind

with which the genius of the storms had filled their sails.

The political army of the First Consul was composed of deserters from the two parties. The royalists sacrificed to him their fidelity to the Bourbons; the patriots, their attachment to liberty: so that no independent style of thinking could show itself under his dominion; for he was more willing to pardon a selfish calculation than a disinterested opinion. It was by the bad side of the human heart that he hoped to gain possession of it.

Bonaparte took the Tuileries for his abode: and even the choice of this residence was a stroke of policy. It was there that the King of France was accustomed to be seen; circumstances connected with monarchy were there presented to every eye; and the very influence of the walls on the minds of spectators was, if we may say so, sufficient for the restoration of regal power. Towards the concluding days of the last century, I saw the First Consul enter the palace built by our kings: and though Bonaparte was still very far from the magnificence which he afterwards displayed, there was visible in all around him an eagerness to vie in the courtier arts of Oriental servility, which must have persuaded him that it was a very easy

matter to govern the earth. When his carriage arrived in the court of the Tuileries, his valets opened the door and put down the steps with a violence which seemed to say, that even inanimate substances were insolent when they retarded his progress for a moment. He neither looked at, nor thanked any person, as if he were afraid of being thought sensible to the homage which he required. As he ascended the staircase in the midst of the crowd which pressed to follow him, his eyes were not fixed on any object or any person in particular. There was an air of vagueness and want of thought in his physiognomy, and his looks expressed only what it always becomes him to show—indifference to fortune, and disdain for men.

One circumstance, which was singularly favourable to the power of Bonaparte; was, that he had nothing but the mass of the nation to manage. All individual existence had been annihilated by ten years of tumult, and nothing acts upon a people like military success: to resist this inclination on their part, instead of profiting by it a great strength of reason is requisite. Nobody in France could believe his situation secure: men of all classes, whether ruined or enriched, banished or recompensed, found themselves, if I may say so, one by one

alike in the hands of power. Thousands of Frenchmen were upon the list of emigrants, thousands more had acquired national domains; thousands were proscribed as priests or nobles; and thousands of others feared to be so for their revolutionary deeds. Bonaparte, who constantly marched between two opposite interests, took care not to terminate these inquietudes by fixed laws, which would enable every man to know his rights. To this or that man he gave back his property; from this or that other he took it away for ever. A decree concerning the restitution of woods reduced one man to misery, while another recovered more than he had originally possessed. Sometimes he restored the estate of the father to the son, or that of the elder brother to the younger, according as he was satisfied or dissatisfied with their attachment to his person. There was not a Frenchman who had not something to ask of the government; and that something was life: for favour then consisted, not in the frivolous pleasure which it can impart, but in the hope of revisiting the land in which he was born, and of recovering a part at least of what he once possessed. The First Consul had reserved to himself, under some pretext or other, the power of disposing of the lot of all and of every one.

This unheard-of state of dependance excuses in a great measure the nation. Is universal heroism to be expected; and was there not need of heroism to run the risk of the ruin and the banishment which impended over all, and which might fall by the application of a decree. A singular concurrence of circumstances placed the laws of the period of terror, and the military force created by republican enthusiasm, at the disposal of one man. What an inheritance for an able despot!

The party among the French who sought to resist the continually increasing power of the First Consul, had to invoke liberty in order to struggle against him with success. But at this word the aristocrats and the enemies of the Revolution roared out against Jacobinism, and thus seconded the tyranny, the blame of which they have since wished to throw upon their adversaries.

To tranquillize the Jacobins, who had not yet all rallied round that court whose intentions they did not well comprehend, pamphlets were poured forth which declared, that there was no reason to apprehend that Bonaparte meant to resemble Cæsar, Cromwell, or Monk, obsolete parts, it was said, which were no longer suitable to the age. It is not, however,

quite certain that the events of this world do not occur again and again with little variation; though such sameness is forbidden to the authors of new pieces for the stage; but the important object then was to furnish a phrase to all who wished to be decently deceived. French vanity at that time began to plume itself upon diplomacy. The whole nation was informed of the secret of the comedy, and, flattered with the confidence, took pleasure in the knowing reserve which was required of it.

The numerous journals which existed in France were subject to a very rigorous but very well arranged censorship; for it was wholly out of the question to impose silence upon a nation which must scatter its witticisms in every direction, in the same way as the games of the circus were necessary to the Roman people. Bonaparte then established that babbling tyranny from which he has since derived so much advantage. The daily papers all repeated the same thing constantly, nor was any one at liberty to contradict them. The freedom of journals differs in several respects from that of books. The journals announce the news for which all classes of people are eager; and the discovery of printing, instead of being, what it has been called, the safeguard of liberty,

would be the most terrible weapon of despotism, if the journals, which constitute the sole reading of three-fourths of the nation, were exclusively subject to authority. For, as regular troops are much more dangerous than a militia to the independence of nations, so hired writers introduce into public opinion much more depravity than could arise where there is no communication except by speech; in which case the judgment could be formed only upon facts. But when the curiosity for news can be satisfied with an allotted portion of falsehood, when no event is related unaccompanied by sophisms, when every one's reputation depends on a calumny propagated by gazettes, which are multiplied on every side, and which there is not a possibility that any person should be allowed to refute; when opinions concerning every circumstance, every work, every individual, are subject to a journalist's word of command, as the movements of soldiers to the leaders of files; then it is that the art of printing becomes what has been said of cannon,—the last reason of kings.

Bonaparte, when he had a million of armed men at his disposal, did not on that account affix less importance to the art of guiding the public mind by the newspapers: he himself often

dictated articles for the journals, which might be recognized by the violent sarcastic turns of the style: he obviously would have wished to put blows instead of words in what he wrote. There is in every part of his nature a basis of vulgarity, which even the gigantic height of his ambition cannot always conceal. Not but that he is able to conduct himself with perfect propriety on any given day; he is however at his ease only when he despises others, and as soon as he can return to that mood, he yields gladly to his inclination. Yet it was not through mere liking that he allowed himself, in his notes for the Moniteur, to employ the cynicism of the revolution in the support of his power. He would permit none but himself to be a Jacobin in France. And when he inserted in his bulletins gross insults against respectable personages, he thought that he should thus captivate the mass of the people and soldiers, by descending, in the very purple with which he was arrayed, to the level of their language and passions.

It is impossible to arrive at great power, except by taking advantage of the tendency of the times: accordingly Bonaparte studied the spirit of his age with care. There had been among the men of talent of the eighteenth century, in France, a noble enthusiasm for the prin-

ciples which constitute the happiness and the dignity of mankind; but, under the shelter of this great oak, the venomous plants of egotism and irony flourished; and Bonaparte knew how to avail himself with ability of these baneful dispositions. He turned every thing, however glorious, into ridicule, except force; *shame to the vanquished* was the declared maxim of his reign; and accordingly there is only one reproach which we would be tempted to address to the disciples of his doctrine; *yet you have not succeeded:* for they would not be affected by blame derived from feelings of morality.

It was however necessary to give a vital principle to this system of derision and immorality upon which the civil government was founded. These negative forces were insufficient to produce a progressive motion, without the impulse of military success. Order in the administration and the finances, the embellishment of cities, the completion of canals and high roads, every thing in short that has been praiseworthy in the management of the interior, had for its sole bases the money obtained by contributions raised upon foreigners. Nothing less was necessary than the revenues of the Continent to

procure these advantages for France; and, far from being founded on durable institutions, the apparent grandeur of this Colossus reposed only on feet of clay.

CHAPTER V.

Should England have made Peace with Bonaparte at his Accession to the Consulate?

WHEN General Bonaparte was named Consul, peace was the blessing which was expected from him. The nation, fatigued with its long struggle, and at that time sure of confirming its independence with the barrier of the Rhine and the Alps, wished only for tranquillity; but the measures to which it had recourse were certainly ill adapted for the accomplishment of its end. The First Consul, however, took steps towards a reconciliation with England, and the ministry of the day declined his overtures. Perhaps they were in the wrong: for, two years afterwards, when Bonaparte had established his power by the victory of Marengo, the English government found itself obliged to sign the treaty of Amiens, which was in every respect more disadvantageous, than that which might have been obtained at a moment when Bonaparte was desirous of a new success, peace with England. Yet I do not join in the opinion of some persons

who pretend that, if the English ministry had accepted his proposals, he would thenceforward have adopted a pacific system. Nothing was more inconsistent with his nature and his interest. He cannot live but in agitation; and if any thing can plead in his behalf with those who reflect on the constitution of man, it is that he can breathe freely nowhere except in a volcanic atmosphere; his interest also recommended to him war.

Every man who becomes the chief of a great country, by other means than hereditary right, will scarcely be able to keep himself in his situation, unless he gives the nation either freedom or military glory, unless he becomes either Washington or a conqueror. Now, as it was difficult to have less resemblance to Washington than Bonaparte had, he could not establish and preserve absolute power, except by stupefying reason, and presenting to the French, every three months, a new scene, so as by the greatness and variety of events to fill up the place of that honourable but calm emulation which free states are invited to enjoy.

One anecdote will show how, from the first day of Bonaparte's accession to the Consulship, those around him were aware of the servility with which they must conduct themselves,

if they would please him. Among the arguments alleged by Lord Grenville for not treating with Bonaparte, one was, that, as the government of the First Consul depended wholly on himself, a durable peace could not be established on the life of a single individual. These words irritated the First Consul, who could not endure that the chance of his death should be discussed. In fact, he who meets with no obstacle in men becomes indignant against nature, which alone refuses to yield; it is easier for the rest of the world to die; their enemies, often their friends too, in short their whole lot prepares them for it. The person employed to refute Lord Grenville's answer in the Moniteur made use of these expressions: "*As to the life and the death of Bonaparte, they, my Lord, are above your reach.*" It was thus that the people of Rome addressed their Emperors by the style of "*Your Eternity.*" Strange destiny of the human species, condemned by its passions to tread the same circle, while it is constantly advancing in the career of ideas. The treaty of Amiens was concluded when Bonaparte's successes in Italy made him already master of the continent; the terms of it were very disadvantageous for the English; and during the year that it lasted, Bonaparte indulged in such for-

midable encroachments, that next to the fault of signing the treaty, that of not breaking it would have been the greatest. At this epoch in 1803, unfortunately for the spirit of freedom in England, and of course on the Continent, to which she serves as a beacon, the opposition, headed by Mr. Fox, followed a path altogether mistaken with respect to Bonaparte; and thenceforward their party, so honourable in other points of view, lost that influence with the nation which for many reasons it would have been desirable that it should have retained. It was already too much to have defended the French Revolution under the reign of terror; but it was, if possible, a still more dangerous fault to consider Bonaparte as adhering to the principles of that revolution, of which he was the ablest destroyer. Sheridan, who by his knowledge and by his talents had the means of establishing his own fame and increasing that of his country, showed clearly to the opposition the part which she ought to play, in the eloquent speech which he delivered on the peace of Amiens.

"The situation of Bonaparte, and the organization of his power, are such," said Sheridan, "that he must enter into a frightful barter with his subjects. He must promise to make them the

masters of the world, that they may consent to be his slaves; and if such be his end, against what power must he turn his restless looks, if not against Great Britain. Some have pretended that he would have no other rivalship with us than that of commerce: happy were this man, if he had ever entertained such views of administration; but strange to say, he follows the old method of prohibitions and excessive taxes. He would wish, however, to arrive at our ruin by a shorter road. He conceives, perhaps, that if this country is once subjugated, he will be able to transport our commerce, our capital, and our credit to his own, as he brought the pictures and statues of Italy to Paris. But his ambitious hopes would be soon deceived: that credit would disappear under the gripe of power; that capital would sink into the earth, if it were trampled at the feet of a despot; and those commercial enterprises would be void of vigour in the presence of an arbitrary government. If he writes in his tablets some marginal notes relative to what he means to do with the different countries which he has subdued or intends to subdue, the whole text is consecrated to the destruction of our native land. It is his first thought when he awakes; it is his prayer to whatever divinity he addresses, Jupiter or

Mahomet, the God of Battles, or the Goddess of Reason. An important lesson should be drawn from the arrogance of Bonaparte: he calls himself the instrument of which Providence has made choice to restore happiness to Switzerland, and splendour and importance to Italy; and we too, we should consider him as an instrument of whom Providence has made choice, to attach us, if possible, more firmly to our constitution, to make us feel the value of the liberty which it secures to us, to annihilate all differences of opinion in the presence of this great interest, in fine, to keep incessantly in our recollection, that every man who leaves France and arrives in England, thinks he has escaped from a dungeon to breathe the air and the life of independence."

Liberty would now be triumphant in the universal opinion, if all who rallied round this noble hope had seen clearly at the commencement of Bonaparte's reign, that the first of the counter-revolutionists, and the only one who was then formidable, was the man who clothed himself with the national colours, that he might re-establish with impunity all that had vanished before them.

The dangers, with which the ambition of the First Consul threatened England, are marked

out with as much truth as force in the speech which we have just quoted. The English ministry is therefore amply justified in having begun the war anew; but, although in the sequel they may have lent more or less countenance to the personal enemies of Bonaparte, they have never gone the length of authorizing an attempt against his life: such an idea did not occur to the leaders of a Christian people. Bonaparte was in great danger from the infernal machine, a mode of assassination the most blameable of all, because it threatened the life of a great number of persons at the same time with that of the Consul. But the English ministers had no share in this conspiracy; there is reason to believe, that the Chouans, that is to say, the Jacobins of the aristocratical party, were alone guilty. On this occasion, however, a hundred and thirty revolutionists were transported, though they had no concern in the infernal machine. But it seemed natural to take advantage of the alarm which this event caused, to get rid of all whom it was desirable to proscribe. A singular mode, we must acknowledge, of treating the human species! The men, it will be said, who were treated thus were odious characters. That may be true; but what though it be?

Will France never learn that there is no respect of persons in the eye of the law? The agents of Bonaparte adopted the extravagant principle of striking both parties, when one of them was in the wrong: and this they called impartiality. About the same time, a man, to whom we may spare the disgrace of being named, proposed that all who should be convicted of an attempt against the life of the First Consul should be burned alive. The proposal of cruel punishments seems to belong to another age than ours; but flattery is not always satisfied with grovelling in insipidity, and meanness very easily becomes ferocity.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the solemn Celebration of the Concordat at Nôtre-Dame.

AT the epoch of the accession of Bonaparte the sincerest partisans of the Catholic faith, after having long been victims of a political inquisition, aspired to nothing more than perfect religious liberty. The general wish of the nation was limited to this: that all persecution of priests should cease for the future; that no kind of oath should be required of them any longer; that the state, in short, should in no respect interfere with the religious notions of any one. The Consular government, therefore, would have satisfied opinion by maintaining in France a complete toleration, like what exists in America, among a people, whose uniform piety proved and best proved by rigid morals, cannot be called in question. But the First Consul was occupied with no such holy thoughts; he knew that if the clergy resumed a political consistence, their influence would promote the interests of despotism; and his intention

was to prepare the way for his arrival at the throne.

He wanted a clergy, as he wanted chamberlains, titles, decorations, in short, all the antient caryatides of power; and he alone was in a situation to restore them. Complaints have been made of the return of old institutions; and it must never be forgotten, that it was Bonaparte who brought them back. It was he who reorganized the clergy, to render them subservient to his designs. The revolutionists, who, fourteen years ago, were still formidable, would never have allowed a political existence to be thus restored to the priests, if a man, whom they considered in some respects as one of their party, had not assured them, when he presented a concordat with the Pope, that the measure was the result of profound combinations, and would be useful in maintaining the new institutions. The revolutionists, with a few exceptions, are violent, rather than crafty; and, for that very reason, are flattered by being treated as men of talent.

Bonaparte, assuredly, is not religious; and the species of superstition, of which some traces have been discovered in his character, relates solely to the worship of himself. He has faith in his own peculiar fortune, and has manifested

the sentiment in different ways. But from Mahometanism to the religion of the fathers of the desert, from the agrarian law to the ceremonial of the court of Louis XIV. his understanding is ready to conceive, and his character to execute, what circumstances may require. As his natural inclination, however, was towards despotism, he liked what favoured it; and he would have preferred the old regime of France more than any person, if he could have persuaded the world that he was lineally descended from St. Louis.

He has often expressed his regret that he did not reign in a country where the monarch was also head of the church, as in England and Russia; but as he found the French clergy still devoted to the court of Rome, he chose to negotiate with it. One day he assured the prelates, that, in his opinion, there was no religion but the Catholic, which was truly founded on ancient traditions; and on this subject he usually displayed to them some erudition acquired the day before: then, when he was with the philosophers, he said to Cabanis, *Do you know what this concordat is which I have just signed? It is the vaccination of religion, and in fifty years there will be none in France.* It was neither religion nor philosophy which he

cared for in the existence of a clergy entirely submissive to his will; but as he had heard mention made of the alliance between the altar and the throne, he began by raising up the altar. The celebration of the concordat was, therefore, if we may use the expression, a full-dressed rehearsal of his coronation.

In the month of April, 1802, he ordered a grand ceremony at Nôtre-Dame. He was present with regal pomp; and named for orator at this inauguration, whom? the Archbishop of Aix, the same who had delivered the coronation sermon in the cathedral of Rheims on the day when Louis XVI. was crowned. Two motives determined him to this choice: the ingenious hope, that the more he imitated the monarchy, the more he suggested the idea of himself being invested with it; and the perfidious design of so degrading the Archbishop of Aix, as to render him wholly dependant, and give the world the measure of his own ascendency. He has always wished, when the thing was possible, that a man of note, in adhering to him, should do some action blameable enough to ruin him in the esteem of every other party. To burn one's ships was to make a sacrifice of reputation to him: he wished to convert men into a sort of coin, which derives its value only from the

impress of the master: subsequent events have proved, that this coin could return into circulation with a fresh image.

On the day of the concordat, Bonaparte repaired to the church of Nôtre-Dame, in the old royal carriages, with the same coachmen, the same footmen walking by the side of the door; he had the whole etiquette of the court most minutely detailed to him; and though first consul of a republic, applied to himself all this pomp of royalty. Nothing, I allow, ever excited in me so strong a feeling of resentment. I had shut myself up in my house that I might not behold the odious spectacle; but I heard the discharges of cannon which were celebrating the servitude of the French people. For was there not something peculiarly disgraceful in having overturned the ancient regal institutions, surrounded at least with noble recollections, to take back the same institutions, in the forms of upstarts, and with the chains of despotism? On that day we might have addressed to the French the beautiful words of Milton to his countrymen: *We shall become the shame of free nations, and the plaything of those which are not free; is this, strangers will say, the edifice of liberty which the English boasted of building? They have done nothing but precisely what was requisite to*

render them for ever ridiculous in the eyes of all Europe. The English at least have not fulfilled this prediction.

In returning from Nôtre-Dame, the First Consul said in the midst of his generals, *Is it not true that to-day every thing appeared restored to the ancient order?* "Yes," was the noble reply of one of them, "except two millions of Frenchmen, who have died for liberty, and who cannot be brought to life." Millions more have perished since, but for despotism.

The French are bitterly accused of irreligion. One of the principal causes of this unhappy result is, that the various factions for twenty-five years have always wished to direct religion to a political end, and nothing is less favourable to piety, than to employ it with any other views than those which belong to itself. The nobler its sentiments are in their own nature, the more repugnance they inspire, when hypocrisy and ambition take advantage of them. After Bonaparte was Emperor, he appointed the same Archbishop of Aix, of whom we have been speaking, to the Archbishopric of Tours: the Archbishop, in turn, in one of his pastoral charges, exhorted the nation to acknowledge Napoleon as legitimate sovereign of France. The minister, who had the superintendence of religious affairs, while he was walking with a

friend of mine, showed him this charge, and said: "See, he calls the Emperor great, generous, illustrious: all that is very well; but *legitimate* is the important word in the mouth of a priest." During twelve years from the date of the concordat, the ecclesiastics of every rank have never let an opportunity pass of praising Bonaparte in their way, that is, by calling him the envoy of God, the instrument of his decrees, the representative of Providence upon earth. The same priests have since doubtless preached another doctrine; but how can it be supposed that a clergy, always at the orders of the existing authority, whatever that may be, should add to the ascendency of religion over the soul?

The catechism which was received in every church during the reign of Bonaparte, threatened with eternal punishment whoever should not love and defend the dynasty of Napoleon. If you do not love Napoleon and his family, said the catechism (which, with this exception, was the catechism of Bossuet), what will happen to you? Answer: Then we shall incur everlasting damnation.* Was it to be believed, how-

* P. 55. Q. What are the duties of Christians towards the princes who govern them, and what are our duties in particular towards Napoleon I. our Emperor?

A. Christians owe to the princes who govern them, and we owe in particular to Napoleon I. our Emperor, love, re-

ever, that Bonaparte would dispose of hell in the next world, because he gave the idea of it in the present? The truth is, that nations have no sincere piety, except in countries where the doctrine of the church is unconnected with political dogmas, in countries where the priests exercise no power over the state, in countries, in short, where a man may love God and Christianity with all his soul, without losing, and still more without obtaining any worldly advantage by the manifestation of this sentiment.

spect, obedience, fidelity, military service, the taxes which are imposed for the preservation and defence of the empire and his throne. - - - - - - To honour and serve the Emperor is therefore to honour and serve God himself.

Q. Are there not particular motives which ought to attach us more strongly to Napoleon I. our Emperor?

A. Yes; for it is he whom God hath raised up in difficult times to re-establish the public worship of the holy religion of our ancestors, and to be its protector. He has restored and preserved public order by his profound and active wisdom: he defends the state by his powerful arm; he is become the anointed of the Lord, by the consecration which he hath received from the sovereign Pontif, the head of the Catholic church.

Q. What ought we to think of those who should fail in their duty towards our Emperor?

A. According to the Apostle Paul, they would resist the established order of God himself, and would render themselves worthy of everlasting damnation.

CHAPTER VII.

M. Necker's last Work under the Consulship of Bonaparte.

M. NECKER had a conversation with Bonaparte, as he passed into Italy by Mount St. Bernard, a little time before the battle of Marengo: during this conversation, which lasted two hours, the First Consul made a rather agreeable impression on my father, by the confidential way in which he spoke to him of his future plans. No personal resentment therefore animated M. Necker against Bonaparte, when he published his book entitled, *Last Political and Financial Views.* The death of the Duc d'Enghien had not yet occurred; many people hoped for much benefit from the government of Bonaparte: and M. Necker was in two respects dependant upon him; both because he was desirous that I should not be banished from Paris, where I loved exceedingly to stay; and because his deposit of two millions was still in the hands of the government, in other words, of the First Consul. But M. Necker, in his retirement, had

imposed the propagation of truth as an official duty upon himself, the obligations of which no motive could induce him to neglect. He wished order and freedom, monarchy and a representative government to be given to France; and as often as any deviation from this line occurred, he thought it his duty to employ his talent as a writer, and his knowledge as a statesman, to endeavour to bring back men's minds towards the true object. At that time, however, regarding Bonaparte as the defender of order, and the preserver of France from anarchy, he called him *the necessary man;* and in several passages of his books praised his abilities again and again with the highest expressions of esteem. But these eulogiums did not pacify the First Consul. M. Necker had touched upon the point which his ambition felt most acutely, by discussing the project he had formed of establishing a monarchy in France of which he was to be the head, and of surrounding himself with a nobility of his own creation. Bonaparte did not wish that his design should be announced before it was accomplished; still less was he disposed to allow its faults to be pointed out. Accordingly, as soon as this work appeared, the journalists received orders to attack it with the greatest fury. Bonaparte distinguished M. Necker as

the principal author of the Revolution: for if he loved this Revolution, because it had set him on the throne, he hated it by his instinct of despotism: he would have wished to have the effect without the cause. Besides, his genius in hatred sagaciously suggested to him that M. Necker, who suffered more than any one from the misfortunes which had struck so many respectable people in France, would be deeply wounded by being designated, though in the most unjust manner, as the man who had prepared them.

No claim for the restoration of my father's deposit was admitted after the publication of his book in 1802; and the First Consul declared, in the circle of his court, that he would not permit me to return to Paris any more, because, he said, I had given my father such false information on the state of France. Assuredly my father had no need of me for any thing in this world, except, I hope, for my affection; and when I arrived at Coppet, his manuscript was already in the press. It is curious to observe what it was in this book that could excite so keenly the resentment of the First Consul.

In the first part of his work, M. Necker analyzed the consular constitution as it then ex-

isted, and examined also the hypothesis of the royalty established by Bonaparte, as it might then be foreseen. He laid it down as a maxim, that there is no representative system without direct election by the people, and that nothing can justify a deviation from this principle. Then proceeding to examine the aristocratical institution, which was to serve as a barrier between the national representation and the executive power, M. Necker judged before hand the Conservative Senate to be, what it has since shown itself, a body to whom every thing would be referred, and which could do nothing, a body which received on the first of every month salaries from the very government it was supposed to control. The senators were necessarily mere commentators on the will of the Consul. A numerous assembly became conjointly responsible for the acts of an individual; and every one felt more at liberty to degrade himself under the shadow of the majority.

M. Necker then foretold the suppression of the Tribunate, as it took place under the consulship "The tribunes," said he, "will think twice of it, before they render themselves troublesome, or run the risk of displeasing a senate, which every year must fix their political lot, and perpetuate them or not in their places. The con-

stitution, in giving the Conservative Senate the right of renewing annually the Legislative Body and the Tribunate by fifths, does not explain in what manner the operation is to be executed: it does not say whether the fifth, which is to give way to another, shall be determined by lot, or by the arbitrary selection of the Senate. It cannot be doubted, but that when once a right of seniority shall be established, the fifth which ranks first in point of time should be selected to go out at the end of five years, and each of the other fifths in a succession arranged on the same principle. But the question is still very important, when applied merely to the members of the Tribunate and of the Legislative Body, who are chosen together at the outset of the constitution; and if the Senate, without having recourse to lot, should assume the right of naming at pleasure the fifth which is to go out annually during five years (this is what it did), freedom of opinion will be henceforth restrained in a very powerful manner.

"There is truly a singular disproportion in the power given to the Conservative Senate; it can remove from the Tribunate whomsoever it shall think fit, as far as one-fifth of the whole; yet it is not itself authorized to act in the preserva-

tion or defence of the constitution, unless by the advice and direction of the Tribunate. What a superiority in one sense, what an inferiority in the other! No part of the structure seems to have been built with symmetry."*

On this point I would venture to dissent from my father's opinion; there was a kind of unity in this incoherent organization; it aimed constantly and craftily at resembling liberty, while it was introducing slavery. Ill-contrived constitutions are well calculated to effect such a result; but that always proceeds from the evil intention of the framer; for every upright understanding at present knows in what the natural and spontaneous springs of liberty consist.

Then passing to the examination of the mute Legislative Body, of which we have already spoken, M. Necker says, with respect to the power of introducing laws, "The government, by an exclusive appropriation, is alone to propose laws. The English would deem themselves ruined, as a free people, if the exercise of such a right were taken away from their parliament; if a prerogative, in itself most important, and the peculiar attribute of civil power, were ever to escape from their hands. The monarch himself shares in it only indirectly, and through

* Last Views on Politics and Finance, p. 41.

the medium of those members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, who are at the same time his ministers.

"The representatives of the nation, who come from all parts of a kingdom or republic, to assemble annually in the capital, and who again return to their homes in the intervals between their sessions, necessarily collect valuable notions on the improvements of which the administration of the state is susceptible. Besides, the power of proposing laws is a political faculty, fruitful in social thoughts, of universal utility, and requiring in the exercise of it an investigating spirit and patriotic soul, whilst, to accept or refuse a law, judgment alone is necessary. Such was the limited office of the ancient parliaments of France. Reduced to this function, and unable to judge of objects except one by one, they never acquired general ideas." *

The Tribunate was instituted to denounce all kinds of arbitrary proceedings; imprisonments, banishments, blows aimed at the liberty of the press. M. Necker shows that, as its election depended on the Senate, and not on the people, it was not strong enough for such a *func-*

* Last Views on Politics and Finance, p. 53.

tion. However, as the First Consul meant to give it many occasions of complaint, he preferred the suppression of it, whatever might be its tameness. The name alone was too republican for the ears of Bonaparte.

It is thus that M. Necker afterwards expresses himself on the responsibility of the agents of power: "Let us in the mean time point out an arrangement of more real consequence, though in a way quite opposite to all ideas of responsibility, and meant to declare the agents of government independent. The consular constitution says, that all agents of the government, besides ministers, cannot be prosecuted for acts relative to their functions, but in virtue of a decision of the Council of State; and then the prosecution is carried on before the ordinary tribunals. Let us observe in the first place, that in virtue of a decision of the Council of State, and in virtue of a decision of the First Consul, are two things that amount to the same; for the Council does not of its own accord deliberate upon any subject; the Consul, who names and dismisses the members at his will, takes their opinions, either assembled in a body, or more frequently distributed into sections, according to the nature of the business; and in the last resort, his own

decision is the rule. But this is of little importance; if the principal object of the arrangement which I have stated is to exempt the agents of the government from every species of inspection and prosecution on the part of the Tribunals, without the consent of the government itself. Thus, however audaciously, however scandalously a receiver or assessor of taxes may prevaricate, the First Consul must determine, before any thing can be done, whether there is ground of accusation. In like manner he will be the sole judge, if other agents of his authority deserve to be called to account for any abuse of power; it is of no importance whether the abuse relates to contributions, to requisitions of personal labour, to supplies of any kind, to the quartering of soldiers, and to forced enlistments, designated by the name of conscription. Never has a moderate government been able to exist on such terms. I shall not here adduce the example of England, where such political laws would be considered as a total dissolution of freedom: but I will say, that under the ancient French monarchy, neither a parliament, nor an inferior court of justice, would have asked the consent of the prince to punish the acknowledged misconduct of a public agent, or

a manifest abuse of power: a particular tribunal, under the name of The Court of Aids, had the ordinary jurisdiction over claims and offences concerning the revenue, and had no need of a special permission to discharge this duty in all its extent.

"In fine, Agent of Government is too vague an expression: authority in its immense circumference may have ordinary and extraordinary agents; a letter of a minister, of a prefect, of a lieutenant of police, is sufficient to constitute an agent; and if in the exercise of their functions they are all out of the reach of justice, without a special permission from the prince, the government will have in its hands men whom such an exemption will render very bold, and who will likewise be sheltered from shame by their direct dependance on the supreme authority. What chosen instruments for tyranny!"

Might we not say, that M. Necker, when he wrote these words in 1802, foresaw what the Emperor has since done with his Council of State? We have seen the functions of the judicial order pass gradually into the hands of that administrative authority, which was without responsibility, as it was without bounds; we

have even seen it usurp the prerogatives of legislation; and this divan had only its master to dread.

M. Necker, after having proved that there was no Republic in France under the Consular government, easily concluded that it was Bonaparte's intention to arrive at royalty: and he then developed in a very forcible manner the difficulty of establishing a moderate monarchy, without having recourse to great nobles previously existing, who are usually inseparable from a prince of ancient lineage. Military glory may certainly supply the place of ancestors; it acts upon the imagination even more powerfully than recollections; but as a king must surround himself with superior ranks, it is impossible to find a sufficient number of citizens illustrious by their exploits to constitute an aristocracy altogether new, which may serve as a barrier to the authority which gave it existence. Nations are not Pygmalions, who adore their own work; and the Senate, composed of new men chosen from among a crowd of equals, had no consciousness of energy, and inspired no respect.

Let us hear on this topic M. Necker's own words. They apply to the Chamber of Peers, such as it was hastily constituted by Bonaparte in

1815; but they apply especially to the military government of Napoleon, which, however, in 1802, was very far from being established as we have since seen it. "If then, either by a political revolution, or by a revolution in opinion, you have lost the elements which produce great nobles, consider yourselves as having lost the elements which produce moderate hereditary monarchy, and turn your views, whatever difficulties you may encounter, to another social system.

"I do not believe that Bonaparte with all his talent, all his genius, and all his power, could succeed in establishing at the present day in France a moderate hereditary monarchy. The opinion is important: I shall allege my reasons; let others judge.

"I wish at the outset to observe, that this opinion is contrary to what we have heard repeated since the election of Bonaparte. France, it was often said, is about to have recourse to the government of one man; that is a point gained for monarchy. But what do such words mean? nothing at all. For we do not wish to speak indifferently of monarchy elective or hereditary, despotic or moderate, but solely of moderate hereditary monarchy: and without doubt the government of any Asiastic prince

that you may choose to name is more distinct from the monarchy of England, than the American Republic.

There is an instrument, unconnected with republican ideas, unconnected with the principles of moderate monarchy, which may be used for the establishment and support of an hereditary government. It is the same which placed and perpetuated the imperial sway in the hands of the great families of Rome, the Julii, the Claudii, the Flavii, and which was afterwards employed to subvert their authority; I mean military force—the prætorian guards, the armies of the East and West. May heaven save France from a similar destiny!"

What a prophecy! If I have insisted several times on the singular merit which M. Necker has had in his political works of predicting events, it is to show how a man deeply versed in the science of constitutions may know their result beforehand. It has been often said in France, that constitutions are nothing, and circumstances every thing. Such language becomes the worshippers of arbitrary power, but the assertion is as false as it is slavish.

The resentment of Bonaparte at the publication of this work was extremely keen, because it drew an early attention to his dearest projects, and those which were the most exposed to the

attacks of ridicule. A sphinx of a new species, he turned his wrath against the man who solved the riddle. The importance which arises from military glory may, it is true, supply every thing: but an empire founded on the chances of battles, was not enough for the ambition of Bonaparte; he wished to establish his dynasty, although he could in his life-time support only his own greatness.

The Consul Le Brun wrote to M. Necker a letter, dictated by Bonaparte, in which all the arrogance of ancient prejudices was combined with the rude harshness of the new despotism. In it M. Necker was likewise accused of having been the man who caused a double number of deputies to be allowed to the third estate, of having constantly one invariable scheme of a constitution, &c. The enemies of freedom hold all the same language, however different the situation from which they proceed. M. Necker was then advised to meddle no more with politics, and to leave them to the First Consul, who only was capable of governing France with wisdom; thus despots ever consider thinking men to be superfluous in affairs. The Consul finished with declaring that I, the daughter of M. Necker, should be exiled from Paris, merely on account of the "*Last Views on Politics and Finances*," published by my father.

I have since, I hope, merited this exile by my own conduct; but Bonaparte, who took the trouble of inquiring that he might wound more effectually, wished to disturb the privacy of our domestic life, by holding up my father to me as the author of my exile. This reflection occurred to my father, who gave ready admission to every scruple; but, thanks to Heaven, he was able to satisfy himself, that it never for an instant haunted me.

A very remarkable thing in the last and perhaps the best political work of M. Necker, is, that after having in preceding books combated with much force the republican system in France, he examines for the first time, what would be the best form that could be given to that kind of government. On the one hand, the sentiments of opposition to the despotism of Bonaparte, which animated M. Necker, inclined him to employ the only weapons that could still reach such an adversary: on the other, at a moment when there was no reason to dread the danger of exciting the public mind too keenly, a political philosopher amused himself with examining a most important question to the full extent of the truth.

The most remarkable idea in this examination is, that when once we decide in favour of a republic, instead of wishing to bring it as near

to a monarchy as possible, we should, on the contrary, place all its strength in popular elements. As the dignity of such an institution reposes only on the assent of the nation, the power which, in this case, is to fill the place of every other, should be made to appear in a variety of forms. This profound maxim is the basis of that scheme of a republic, of which M. Necker details all the parts,—though, with the often repeated caution, that he would not advise a great country to adopt it.

He concludes his last work by some general considerations on finances. They contain two essential truths: First, the consular government was in a much better situation in this respect than the King of France had ever been, because, on the one hand, the increase of territory increased the receipts, while, on the other, the reduction of the debt diminished the expenses; and, besides, the taxes were more productive, though the people were less burthened, by reason of the suppression of tithes and feudal rights. In the second place, M. Necker affirmed, in 1802, that credit could never exist without a free constitution: not, assuredly, that the leaders of the present day have an enthusiastic love of liberty, but because the calculation of their interest teaches them that confidence can be put only in durable

institutions, and not in ministers of finance, whom caprice has chosen, whom caprice may remove, and who, in the retirement of their closet, decide upon what is just and unjust, without ever being illuminated by the broad daylight of public opinion.

Bonaparte, in truth, maintained his finances by the produce of foreign contributions, and by the revenue of his conquests; but he could not have borrowed freely the most inconsiderable portion of the sums which he collected by force. It would be good advice to sovereigns in general, who wish to know the truth with respect to their government, that they should judge rather from the manner in which their loans are filled up, than from the testimony of their flatterers.

Though Bonaparte could find in M. Necker's work no words concerning himself which were not flattering, he let loose against him with unheard-of bitterness the journals which were all at his command; and from that time this system of calumny has never ceased. The same writers, under different colours, have never varied in their hatred against a man, who was the advocate of the most rigid economy in the finances, and of such institutions in government as compel rulers to be just.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Exile.

AMONG all the prerogatives of authority, one of the most favourable to tyranny is the power of banishing without trial. The lettres de cachet of the old regime had been justly held forth as one of the most urgent motives for effecting a revolution in France: yet it was Bonaparte, the chosen man of the people, who, trampling under foot all the principles the support of which had caused the popular insurrection, assumed the power of banishing whoever displeased him even a little, and of imprisoning without any interference on the part of the tribunals, whoever displeased him in a higher degree. I can understand, I admit, how the greater part of the old courtiers rallied round the political system of Bonaparte: they had only one concession to make to him, that of changing their master: but how could the republicans submit to his tyranny; the republicans, whom every word, every act, every decree of his government must have shocked.

A very considerable number of men and women of different opinions have been sufferers by these decrees of exile, which give the sovereign of the state a more absolute authority than even that which can result from illegal imprisonments: for it is more difficult to carry into effect a violent measure, than to exert a species of power, which, though terrible in reality, has something benign in its form. The imagination clings to an insurmountable obstacle; great men,—Themistocles, Cicero, Bolingbroke, were extremely wretched in exile: Bolingbroke, in particular, declares in his writings that death seemed to him less terrible.

To remove a man or a woman from Paris, to send them, as it was then called, to breathe the air of the country, was designating a severe punishment by such gentle expressions, that the flatterers of power turned it easily into derison. Yet the fear of such an exile was sufficient to make all the inhabitants of the principal city of the empire stoop to slavery. The scaffolds may at last rouse resistance; but domestic vexations of every kind, which are the result of banishment, weaken resistance, and cause you to dread *only* the displeasure of the sovereign who can impose upon you so wretched an existence. You may pass your life voluntarily out of your own country:

but when you are constrained to do so, you are incessantly imagining that the objects of your affection may be sick, while you are not permitted to be near them, and will perhaps never see them again. The affections of your choice, often family affections too, your habits of society, the interests of your fortune, are all compromised; and what is still more cruel, every tie is relaxed, and you finally become a stranger in your native land.

I have often thought, during the twelve years of exile to which Bonaparte condemned me, that he could not feel the misfortune of being deprived of France. He had no French recollections in his heart. The rocks of Corsica alone retraced to him the days of his infancy: but the daughter of M. Necker was more French than he. I reserve for another work, of which several passages are already written, all the circumstances of my exile, and of the journeys, even to the confines of Asia, which were the consequences of it: but as I have almost forbidden myself to draw portraits of living characters, I could not give to the history of an individual the kind of interest which it ought to have. In the mean time, I must limit myself to retracing what may enter with propriety into the general plan of this work.

" I discovered sooner than others (and I am proud of it) the tyrannical character and designs of Bonaparte. The true friends of liberty are guided in such subjects by an instinct which does not deceive them. To render my situation at the beginning of the consulship still more painful, people of fashion in France thought that they saw in Bonaparte the man who saved them from anarchy or Jacobinism; and they therefore blamed strongly the spirit of opposition which I exhibited against him. Whoever in politics foresees to-morrow, excites the resentment of those who think only of to-day. More courage, I will venture to say, was requisite to support the persecution of society, than to encounter that of power.

I have always retained the recollection of one of these drawing-room punishments, if I may so express myself, which the French aristocrats know so well how to inflict on those who do not participate in their opinions. A great part of the ancient nobility had rallied round Bonaparte; some, as has since appeared, to resume the habits of courtiers; others, in the hope that the First Consul would restore the old dynasty. It was known that I had declared myself decidedly against the system of government which Napoleon was following and was preparing; and

the partisans of arbitrary power gave, as usual, the name of antisocial to opinions which tend to exalt the dignity of nations. If some of the emigrants, who returned under the reign of Bonaparte, were to call to mind the fury with which they then blamed the friends of liberty who continued always attached to the same system, perhaps they would learn indulgence by recollecting their errors.

I was the first woman whom Bonaparte exiled; but a great number, adherents of opposite opinions, soon shared my fate. Among others, a very interesting personage, the Duchess de Chevreuse, died of grief occasioned by her exile. She could not, when at the point of death, obtain permission from Napoleon to return once more to Paris, to consult her physician, and enjoy a last sight of her friends. Whence proceeded this luxury in mischief, if not from a sort of hatred against all independent beings? And as women on the one hand could in no respect promote his political designs, while on the other they were less accessible than men to the hopes and fears of which power is the dispenser, he regarded them with peevish resentment as so many rebels, and took pleasure in addressing to them vulgar and injurious speeches. He hated the spirit of chivalry, as much as he sought after etiquette,—

a bad selection undoubtedly from the manners of ancient days. He likewise retained from his early habits during the Revolution a Jacobinical antipathy to the brilliant society of Paris, over which the women exercised a great ascendency: he dreaded in them the art of pleasantry, which, it must be allowed, belongs particularly to French women. Had Bonaparte been satisfied with acting the proud part of a great general and first magistrate of the republic, he would have soared in all the height of his genius far above the small but pointed shafts of drawing-room wit. But when he entertained the design of becoming an upstart king, a citizen gentleman upon the throne, he exposed himself as a fine aim to the mockery of fashion; and to restrain it, as he has done, he was obliged to have recourse to terror, and the employment of spies.

Bonaparte wished me to praise him in my writings, not assuredly that an eulogium the more would have been remarked in the fumes of the incense which surrounded him; but he was vexed that I should be the only writer of reputation in France, who had published books during his reign without making any mention of his gigantic existence, and at last with inconceivable rage he suppressed my work on Germany. Till then my disgrace had consisted

merely in my removal from Paris; but from that time I was forbidden to travel, and was threatened with imprisonment for the remainder of my days. The contagion of exile, the noble invention of the Roman Emperors, was the most cruel aggravation of this punishment. They who came to see the banished, exposed themselves to banishment in their turn; the greater part of the Frenchmen with whom I was acacquainted avoided me, as if I had been tainted with a pestilence. This appeared to me like a comedy, when the pain it gave was not extreme: and as travellers under quarantine mischievously throw their handkerchiefs to the passers by, to compel them to share in the wearisome sameness of their confinement, so when I happened to meet a man of Bonaparte's court in the streets of Geneva, I was tempted to terrify him by my polite attentions.

My generous friend, M. Matthieu de Montmorenci, had come to see me at Coppet, and received, four days after his arrival, a *lettre de cachet*, by which he was banished, as a punishment for having given the consolation of his presence to a woman who had been his friend for twenty-five years. I know not what I would not have done at this moment to avoid such a pain. At the same time Madame Recamier, who

took no concern in politics beyond a courageous interest for the proscribed of all opinions, came also to see me at Coppet, where we had met several times already; and, would it be believed? the most beautiful woman in France, who on this ground alone should have found defenders every where, was exiled, because she had come to the country seat of an unfortunate friend a hundred and fifty leagues from Paris. This coalition of two women settled on the shore of the lake of Geneva, appeared too formidable to the master of the world, and he incurred the ridicule of persecuting them. But he had once said, *Power is never ridiculous*, and assuredly he put this maxim thoroughly to the proof.

How many families have we not seen divided by the fear which was caused by the slightest connexions with the exiled? At the commencement of the tyranny, there were some distinguished examples of courage; but vexation gradually alters our sentiments, we are exhausted by constant opposition, and we begin to think that the disgraces of our friends are occasioned by their own faults. The sages of the family assemble to say, that there must not be too much communication kept up with Mr. or Mrs.

such a one; their excellent sentiments, it is declared, cannot be doubted, but their imagination is so lively! In truth they would willingly proclaim all these poor proscribed sufferers to be great poets, on condition that their imprudence be admitted as a reason for neither seeing them nor writing to them. Thus friendship, and even love, are frozen in every heart; private qualities fall with the public virtues; men no longer care for one another, after having ceased to care for their country; and they learn only to employ an hypocritical language, which contains a softened condemnation of those who are out of favour, a skilful apology for the powerful, and the concealed doctrine of egotism.

Bonaparte had above every other man the secret of producing that cold isolation which presented men to him individually and never collectively. He was unwilling that a single person of his time should exist by his own means, that a marriage should be celebrated, a fortune acquired, a residence chosen, a talent exercised, or any resolution taken, without his leave; and, what is remarkable, he entered into the minutest details of the relations of each individual, so as to unite the empire of the con-

queror to the inquisitive curiosity of scandal, and to hold in his hands the finest threads as well as the strongest chains.

The metaphysical question of the free-will of man became altogether useless under the reign of Bonaparte; for no person could any longer follow his own will, either in the most important circumstances or in the most trifling.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the last Days of M. Necker.

I WOULD not speak of the feeling which the death of my father produced in me, were it not an additional means of making him known. When the political opinions of a statesman are still in many respects the subject of debate in the world, we should not neglect to give to his principles the sanction of his character. Now what better proof can be given than the impression which it produced upon the people, who were most within reach of judging? It is now twelve years since death separated me from my father, and every day my admiration of him has increased; the recollection which I have retained of his talents and virtues, serves me as a point of comparison to appreciate the worth of other men; and though I have traversed all Europe, a genius of the same style, a moral principle of the same vigour, has never come within my way. M. Necker might be feeble from goodness, and wavering from reflection; but when he believed that duty was concerned in a resolution, he thought that he heard the voice

of God; and whatever attempts might be made to shake him, he listened only to it. I have even now more confidence in the least of his words, than I should have in any individual alive, however superior that individual might be: every thing that M. Necker has said is firm in me as a rock: what I have gained myself may disappear; the identity of my being consists in the attachment which I bear to his memory. I have loved those whom I love no more; I have esteemed those whom I esteem no more; the waves of life have carried all away, except this mighty shade whom I see upon the summit of yonder mountain, pointing out to me with its finger the life to come.

I owe no real gratitude on earth but to God and my father; the remainder of my days has passed in contention; he alone poured his blessing over them. But how much has he not suffered! The most brilliant prosperity distinguished one half of his life; he was rich; he had been named prime minister of France; the unbounded attachment of Frenchmen had recompensed him for his devotedness to their cause: during the seven years of his first retirement, his works had been placed in the first class of those of statesmen: and perhaps he was the only individual who had shown himself

profoundly skilled in the art of governing a great country, without ever deviating from the most scrupulous morality or even the most refined delicacy. As a religious writer, he had never ceased to be a philosopher; as a philosopher, he had never ceased to be religious; eloquence had not hurried him away beyond the limits of reason, nor had reason ever deprived him of a single emotion of true eloquence. To these great advantages he had joined the most flattering success in society: Madame du Deffant, who was acknowledged to have more lively smartness of conversation than any other woman in France, declared in her letters that she had met with no man more pleasing than M. Necker. He too possessed the same charm of conversation, but he employed it only among his friends. In fine, the universal opinion of France, in 1789, was, that no minister had ever carried further every kind of talent and virtue. There is not a city, not a town, not a corporation in France, from which we have not addresses expressive of this sentiment. I transcribe here from among a thousand others that which was written to the republic of Geneva by the city of Valence.

"Gentlemen Syndics,

"Amid the enthusiasm of liberty which in-

flames the whole French nation, and which penetrates us with a deep sense of the goodness of our august monarch, we have thought that we owe you a tribute of gratitude. It was in the bosom of your republic that M. Necker first saw the light: it was in the abode of your public virtues that his heart was trained to the practice of all those of which he has given us an affecting spectacle; it was in the school of your good principles, that he imbibed that gentle and consoling morality which strengthens confidence, inspires respect, and prescribes obedience to legitimate authority. It was likewise among you, gentlemen, that his soul acquired that firm and vigorous temper which the statesman needs when he devotes himself with intrepidity to the painful duty of labouring for the public good.

"Penetrated with veneration for so many different qualities, the union of which in M. Necker exalts our admiration, we think that we owe to the citizens of Geneva a public testimony of our gratitude, for having formed in its bosom a minister so perfect in every respect.

"We desire that our letter may be recorded in the registers of your republic, that it may be a lasting monument of our veneration for your respectable fellow-citizen."

Alas! could it have been foreseen, that so much admiration would be followed by so much injustice;—that he who cherished France with a predilection almost too great, would be reproached with entertaining the sentiments of a stranger; that one party would call him the author of the Revolution, because he respected the rights of the nation, and that the leaders of that nation would accuse him of having wished to sacrifice it to the defence of the monarchy? So in former times, as I am fond of repeating, the Chancellor de l'Hôpital was alternately threatened by the Catholics and the Protestants: so Sully would have sunk under party hatred, if the firmness of his master had not supported him. But neither of these statesmen had that lively imagination of the heart which renders us accessible to every kind of pain. M. Necker was calm before God, calm at the approach of death, because at that instant conscience alone spoke. But while he was yet occupied with the interests of this world, there was not a reproach which did not hurt him, not an enemy whose ill-will did not wound him, not a day in which he did not subject himself to twenty different examinations, sometimes to accuse himself of evils which he could not have prevented, sometimes to place himself in the rear of

events, and weigh anew the different resolutions which he might have taken. The purest enjoyments of life were poisoned to him by the unequalled persecutions of party spirit. This party spirit showed itself even in the manner, in which the emigrants, in the time of their distress, applied to him for aid. Several, when they wrote to him on this subject, apologized for not being able to visit him, because the chief man among them had forbidden them to do so. They judged well at least of M. Necker's generosity, when they believed that this submission to the impertinence of their leaders would not prevent him from doing them service.

The slavery of the press, among other inconveniencies, placed literary decisions in the hands of the government: the consequence was, that, by means of the journalists, the police disposed, for the time at least, of the literary success of a writer, in the same way as it granted licenses for gambling. Accordingly the writings of M. Necker, during the concluding period of his life, were not judged impartially in France; and this was an additional evil which he had to bear in his retirement. The last but one of his works, entitled, *A Course of Religious Morality*, is, I venture to affirm, one of the best written devotional books, one of the strongest

in thought and eloquence, of which the Protestants can boast: and I have often found it in the hands of persons whose hearts have been stricken with sorrow. Yet the journals under Bonaparte made scarcely any mention of it; and the little that they said gave no correct idea of it. There have been in like manner in other countries some examples of master-pieces in literature, which were not rightly estimated, till long after the death of their author. It is painful to reflect that one, who was so dear to us, was deprived even of the pleasure which his talents as a writer indisputedly deserved.

He beheld not the day of justice shine forth for his memory, and his life ended in the very year in which Bonaparte was about to declare himself Emperor, that is, at an epoch when no kind of virtue was held in honour in France. Such was the delicacy of his soul, that the reflection, which tormented him during his last illness, was the fear of having been the cause of my exile; and I was not near to restore him to confidence. He wrote to Bonaparte with a feeble hand, requesting him to recall me when he should be no more. I sent this sacred request to the Emperor; he returned no answer: magnanimity always appeared to him affectation, and he spoke of it pretty freely as a

virtue only of the drama: had he known its powerful influence, he would have been at once a better and an abler man. After so many sorrows, and the exercise of so many virtues, the capacity for affection appeared to have increased in my father, at the age when it diminishes in other men: and every thing about him announced, that when he ceased to live he returned to Heaven.

CHAPTER X.

Abstract of M. Necker's Principles on Government.

IT has been often said that religion is necessary for the people; and I think it easy to prove, that men of an exalted rank have still more need of it. The same is true of morality in its connexions with politics. Men have never been weary of repeating that it suits individuals, and not nations: the truth, on the contrary, is, that it is to the government of states that fixed principles are especially applicable. As the existence of this or that individual is fleeting and transitory, it sometimes happens that a bad action is useful to him for the moment, in a conjuncture where his personal interest is at stake; but as nations are durable, they cannot disregard the general and permanent laws of intellectual order, without proceeding to their ruin. The injustice which may be advantageous to one man by way of exception, is always injurious to successions of men, whose lot must necessarily fall under the general rule.

The circumstance which has given some currency to the infernal maxim which places politics above morality, is, that the leaders of the state have been confounded with the state itself. These chiefs have often experienced, that it was more convenient and advantageous for them to extricate themselves at any price from a present difficulty; and they have drawn out into principles the measures to which their selfishness or their incapacity induced them to have recourse. A man embarrassed in his affairs would willingly establish the theory—that borrowing at high interest is the best financial system which can be adopted. Now immorality of every kind is borrowing at usurious interest; it saves for the moment, to ruin in the end.

M. Necker, during his first ministry, was not in a situation to think of the establishment of a representative government: in proposing courts of provincial administration, he wished to set a limit to the power of ministers, and to give influence to enlightened men and rich proprietors in all parts of France. M. Necker's first maxim in government was to avoid arbitrary power, and to limit the action of the ministry in every thing that was not necessary to the maintenance of order. A minister, who wishes to do every thing, to order every thing, and who is jealous

of power as a personal enjoyment, is fit for courts, but not for nations. A man of genius, when such a man finds himself by chance at the head of public affairs, should try to render himself useless. Good institutions embody and establish those lofty ideas, which no individual, whoever he may be, can put in action for more than a short time.

To hatred of arbitrary power, M. Necker joined great respect for opinion, and a deep interest for that abstract, yet real being, called the people, which has not ceased to be the object of pity, though it has shown itself to be formidable. He believed it was necessary to secure to the people knowledge and comfort; two inseparable blessings. He did not wish to sacrifice the nation to privileged casts; but he was at the same time of opinion, that ancient customs should be dealt with gently, on account of new circumstances. He believed in the necessity of distinctions in society, that the rudeness of power might be diminished by the voluntary ascendancy of consideration: but aristocracy, according to his conception, was an institution intended to excite the emulation of all men of merit.

M. Necker hated wars of ambition, estimated very highly the resources of France; and be-

lieved that such a country, governed by the wisdom of a true national representation, and not by the intrigues of courtiers, had nothing to desire or fear in the middle of Europe.

However beautiful, it will be said, the doctrine of M. Necker might be, it has not succeeded, and therefore was not adapted to men as they are. An individual may not obtain from heaven the favour of aiding the triumph of the truths which he proclaims; but are they the less truths on that account? Though Galileo was thrown into prison, have not the laws of nature discovered by him been since universally acknowledged? Morality and freedom are as certainly the only bases of the happiness and dignity of the human race, as the system of Galileo is the true theory of the celestial motions.

Consider the power of England: whence does it proceed? From her virtues, and her constitution. Suppose for a moment that this island, now so prosperous, were all at once deprived of her laws, of her public spirit, of the freedom of the press, of her parliament, which derives its strength from the people, and gives them back its own in return, how her fields would be dried up! How her harbours would be forsaken! The very agents of arbitrary power, unable any longer to obtain their subsidies from

a country without credit and without patriotism, would regret the liberty which for so long a time had at least supplied them with treasures.

The misfortunes of the Revolution resulted from the unreflecting resistance of the privileged ranks to what reason and force demanded; this question is still debated, after twenty-seven years. The dangers of the struggle are lessened, because the parties are weaker; but its issue will be the same. M. Necker disdained Machiavelism in politics, quackery in finances, and arbitrary power in government. He thought that the highest talent consisted in bringing society into harmony with the immutable, though silent laws to which the Divinity has subjected human nature. On this ground he may be attacked: for it is the ground on which, if he were alive, he would still place himself.

He did not plume himself on that kind of talent which is requisite to constitute the leader of a faction or a despot: he had too much order in his understanding, and too much peace in his soul, to be fit for those great irregularities of nature which swallow up the age and the country in which they appear. But if he had been born an Englishman, I say with pride, that no minister would ever have surpassed him; for he was a firmer friend to liberty than Mr.

Pitt, more austere than Mr. Fox, and not less eloquent, not less energetic, nor less penetrated with the dignity of the state than Lord Chatham. Ah! why was he not permitted, like that nobleman, to utter his last words in the senate of his country, in the midst of a nation which can judge, which can be grateful, and whose enthusiasm, far from being the presage of slavery, is the recompense of virtue!

In the mean time, let us return to the examination of that political personage who forms the most complete contrast to the principles which we have just sketched; and let us see whether Bonaparte himself does not help to prove the truth of those principles, which alone could have maintained him in power, and preserved the glory of the French name.

CHAPTER XI.

Bonaparte Emperor. The Counter Revolution effected by him.

WHEN Bonaparte, at the close of the last century put himself at the head of the French people, the whole nation desired a free and constitutional government. The nobles, long exiled from France, aspired only to return in peace to their homes; the Catholic clergy invoked toleration; as the republican warriors had effaced by their exploits the splendour of the distinctions of nobility, the feudal race of ancient conquerors respected the new victors, and a revolution had taken place in the public mind. Europe was willing to resign to France the barrier of the Rhine and the Alps; and the only thing that remained was to secure these advantages by repairing the evils which the acquisition of them had brought along with it. But Bonaparte conceived the idea of effecting a counter-revolution to his own advantage, by retaining in the state nothing new except himself. He re-established the throne, the clergy, and

the nobility; a monarchy, as Mr. Pitt said, without legitimacy and without imitation; a clergy, who were only the preachers of despotism; a nobility composed of old and new families, who exercised no magistracy in the state, and served only as a gaudy decoration of arbitrary power.

Bonaparte opened the door to ancient prejudices, flattering himself that he could arrest them precisely at the point which suited his omnipotence. It has been often said, that he would have kept his place, if he had been moderate. But what is meant by moderate? If he had established with sincerity and dignity the English constitution in France, he would doubtless still have been emperor. His victories made him a prince: it was his love of etiquette, his thirst for flattery, titles, decorations, chamberlains, that brought him again to view in the character of an upstart. But however rash his system of conquest might be, from the moment that his soul became so grovelling as to see no grandeur except in despotism, it was perhaps impossible for him to do without continual wars; for what would a despot be without military glory in a country like France? Could the nation be oppressed in the interior, without giving it the fatal compensation of ruling elsewhere in its turn? Absolute power is the

scourge of the human race; and all the French governments which have succeeded the Constituent Assembly have perished by yielding to this seduction under some pretext or other.

At the moment when Bonaparte wished to be named emperor, he believed it was necessary to give new confidence on the one hand to the revolutionists with respect to the possibility of the return of the Bourbons, and on the other to prove to the royalists that, in attaching themselves to him, they separated themselves irremediably from the cause of the ancient dynasty. It was to accomplish this double end that he perpetrated the murder of a prince of the blood, —the Duc d'Enghien. He passed the Rubicon of crime, and from that day his downfall was written in the book of destiny.

One of the Machiavelian politicians of the court of Bonaparte said on this occasion, *that the assassination of D'Enghien was much worse than a crime, for it was a fault.* I have, I acknowledge, a profound contempt for all those politicians whose talent consists in showing themselves superior to virtue. Let them for once show themselves superior to egotism, that will be more uncommon, and even more ingenious.

Nevertheless, those who blamed the murder of the Duc d'Enghien as a bad speculation,

were right even in this view of the matter. The revolutionists, and the royalists, in spite of the terrible cement of innocent blood, did not deem themselves irrevocably united to the lot of their master. He had made interest the deity of his partisans; and the adepts in his doctrine practised it against himself when misfortune struck him.

In the spring of 1804, after the death of the Duc d'Enghien, and the abominable prosecution of Moreau and Pichegru, when every mind was filled with a terror which might in an instant be changed into revolt, Bonaparte sent for some senators with whom he conversed with affected negligence on the proposition which had been made to him of declaring himself emperor, treating it as a matter on which he had not yet come to a fixed resolution. He took a review of the different lines of conduct which might be adopted for France,—a republic,—the recall of the ancient dynasty,—lastly, the creation of a new monarchy; like a person conversing on the affairs of another, and examining them with perfect impartiality. Those who talked with him resisted with the most vehement energy, as often as he exhibited arguments in favour of any other power than his own. At last, Bonaparte allowed himself to be convinced: *Very*

well, said he, *since you believe that my nomination to the title of Emperor is necessary to the happiness of France, take at least precautions against my tyranny:—Yes, I repeat it, against my tyranny. Who knows if, in the situation in which I am about to be placed, I shall not be tempted to abuse my power?*

The senators went away moved by this amiable candour, the consequences of which were the suppression of the Tribunate, all-complaisant as it was; the establishment of the exclusive power of the Council of State, as an instrument in the hand of Bonaparte; the government of the police, a permanent body of spies; and, in the sequel, seven state prisons, where those who were confined could be judged by no tribunal, as their lot depended merely on the decision of the ministers.

To maintain such a tyranny, it was necessary to satisfy the ambition of all who would engage in its support. The contributions of the whole of Europe afforded scarcely a sufficient supply of money; and accordingly Bonaparte sought other treasures in vanity.

The principal moving power of the French Revolution was the love of equality. Equality in the eye of the law partakes of justice, and consequently of liberty: but the desire of anni-

hilating every superior rank is one of the littlenesses of self-love. Bonaparte well knew the influence of this failing in France, and this is the mode in which he availed himself of it. The men who had shared in the Revolution were not willing that there should be classes above them. Bonaparte rallied them round his standard by promising them the titles and dignities of which they had stripped the nobles. "Do you wish for equality?" said he to them, "I will do better still, I will give you inequality in your own favour: MM. de la Tremouille, de Montmorency, &c. will be, according to law, private citizens of the state, while the titles of the old regime, and the offices at court, will be possessed, if it so pleases the Emperor, by the most vulgar names." What a strange idea! would not one have thought that a nation, so prompt at laying hold of improprieties, would have delivered itself up to the inextinguishable laugh of the gods of Homer, at seeing all those republicans disguised as dukes, counts, and barons, and making their attempts in the study of the manners of great lords, like men repeating a part in a play. A few songs indeed were composed on these upstarts of every kind, kings and footmen; but the splendour of victories and the force of despotism made every thing

succeed, for some years at least. The republicans who had been seen disdaining the rewards given by our monarchs, had no longer room enough upon their coats for the broad badges, German, Italian, and Russian, with which they were bespangled. A military order, the iron crown, or the legion of honour, might be accepted by warriors, in whom such distinctions recalled their wounds and their exploits: but did the ribands and keys of a chamberlain, with all the other apparatus of courts, suit men who had stirred heaven and earth to abolish such vain pomp? An English caricature represents Bonaparte as cutting up the red cap of liberty into shreds, to make a grand *cordon* of the legion of honour. How exact an image of the nobility invented by Bonaparte, who could boast of nothing but the favour of their master! The French troops can no longer be regarded but as the soldiers of an individual, after having once been the defenders of the nation. Ah! how great were they then!

Bonaparte had read history in a confused way: little accustomed to study, he made much less use of what he had learned from books than of what he had picked up by his observation of men. There remained however in his head a certain respect for Attila and Charle-

magne, for feudal laws and oriental despotism, which he applied right or wrong, never making a mistake as to what would instantaneously promote his power; but on other points quoting, blaming, praising, reasoning, as chance conducted him. He would speak in this way for hours together, with so much the more advantage, that nobody interrupted him, except by the involuntary applauses which always burst forth on such occasions. It is a singular circumstance, that, in conversation, several of Bonaparte's officers have borrowed from their leader this heroical bombast, which in truth has no meaning but at the head of eight hundred thousand men.

Bonaparte, therefore, to make at once a Carlovingian and an oriental empire, bethought himself of creating fiefs in the countries conquered by him, and of investing with them his generals or principal ministers. He fixed the rights of primogeniture, he issued decrees concerning substitutions, he did one the service of concealing his former situation under the unknown title of Duke of Rovigo; while, on the contrary, by taking away from Macdonald, from Bernadotte, from Massena, the names which they had rendered illustrious by so many noble exploits, he as it were defrauded renown of its rights,

and remained alone, as he desired, in possession of the military glory of France.

It was not enough to have degraded the republican party by entirely changing its nature; Bonaparte wished also to deprive the royalists of that dignity which they owed to their perseverance and their misfortunes. He gave the greater part of the offices of his household to nobles of the old regime: he thus flattered the new race by mingling them with the old, and, as he himself united the vanity of an upstart to the gigantic talents of a conqueror, he loved the flattery of the courtiers of the former reign because they were more skilful in that art than the new men, whatever might be the eagerness of the latter to distinguish themselves in the same career. As often as a gentleman of the old court called back to recollection the etiquette of the days that were gone, and proposed an additional bow, a certain mode of knocking at the door of an anti-chamber, a more ceremonious manner of presenting a dispatch, of folding a letter, or concluding it with such or such a form, he was received as if he had made a contribution to the happiness of the human race. The code of imperial etiquette is the most remarkable document of the meanness to which the human race may be reduced.

The followers of Machiavelian principles will say, that it is in this way that men must be deceived; but is it true that men are deceived in our days? Bonaparte was obeyed (let us not cease to repeat it), because he gave military glory to France. Whether that was a benefit or the contrary, it was at least a clear and unsophisticated fact. But all the Chinese farces which were played off before his car of triumph were agreeable only to his servants, whom, had it been convenient for him, he might have led in an hundred other ways. Bonaparte frequently took his court for his empire; he liked better to be treated as a prince than as a hero; perhaps, at the bottom of his soul, he was conscious that he had more right to the first of these titles than to the second.

The partisans of the Stüarts, when the crown was offered to Cromwell, took their ground upon the principles of the friends of liberty to oppose him, and it was not till the epoch of the Restoration that they resumed the doctrine of absolute power: they therefore remained at least faithful to the ancient dynasty. A great part of the French nobility hastened to the courts of Bonaparte and his family. When a man of very high birth was reproached for having become chamberlain to one of the prin-

cesses, *But what would you have me to do?* said he, *I must serve some one.* What a reply! Does it not contain the full condemnation of governments founded upon the spirit of a court?

The English nobles preserved much more dignity in their civil disturbances; for they did not commit two enormous faults, from which the French *noblesse* cannot easily exculpate themselves; the one, that of having joined foreigners against their own country;—the other, that of having accepted places in the palace of a man who, according to their maxims, had no right to the throne; for the election of the people, supposing that Bonaparte could have alleged it in his favour, was not in their eyes a legitimate title. Assuredly they have no right to be intolerant after such proofs of compliance; and less injury is done, in my opinion, to the illustrious House of Bourbon, by wishing for constitutional limits to the authority of the throne, than by having held places under a new sovereign polluted with the assassination of a youthful warrior of the ancient race.

Could the French nobles, who served Bonaparte in the employments of the palace, pretend, that they were constrained to do so? Far more petitions were refused than places given: and those who did not choose to submit to the

desires of Bonaparte in this respect were not obliged to make part of his court. Adrian and Mathieu de Montmorency, whose names and characters drew attention, Elzear de Sabran, the Duke and Duchess of Duras, several others also, though not in great numbers, would have no concern with employments offered by Bonaparte; and although courage is requisite to resist that torrent which in France carries every thing in the direction of power, these courageous persons preserved their virtuous pride without being obliged to renounce their country. In general, to do nothing is almost always possible, and it is proper it should be so, since there is no excuse for acting contrary to principle.

There were certainly none of the French nobles who fought in the armies like the courtiers who were personally connected with the dynasty of Bonaparte. Warriors, whoever they are, may allege a thousand excuses, and better than excuses, according to the motives which influenced them, and the conduct which they followed. For at every epoch of the Revolution France has existed; and surely the first duties of a citizen are to his country.

Never had a man the art of multiplying the ties of dependance more ably than Bonaparte.

He surpassed every body in his knowledge of the great and the little means of despotism: he concerned himself perseveringly with the dress of the women, that their husbands, ruined by their expenses, might be obliged to have recourse to him more frequently. He wished likewise to strike the imaginations of the French by the pomp of his court. The old soldier who smoked at the door of Frederick II was sufficient to make him respected by all Europe. Bonaparte without doubt had enough of military talents to obtain the same result by the same means: but to be master was not all that he desired; he wished also to be a tyrant: to oppress Europe and France, recourse was necessarily had to all the means of degrading the human species; and accordingly the wretch has succeeded but too well.

In life, the balance of human motives to good or evil is usually in equilibrium, and it is conscience which decides. But, when under Bonaparte, more than forty millions sterling of revenue and eight hundred thousand armed men threw their weight into the scale of bad actions, when the sword of Brennus was on the same side with the gold to make the balance incline; how powerful was the seduction! Yet the calculations of ambition and avarice would not

have been sufficient to render France submissive to Bonaparte: something great is requisite to excite masses of people, and it was military glory which intoxicated the nation, while the nets of despotism were spread out by some men, whose meanness and corruption cannot be sufficiently branded. They treated constitutional principles as a chimera, like the courtiers of the old governments of Europe, whose places they aspire to occupy. But their master, as we shall soon see, coveted more than the crown of France, and did not limit himself to that plain vulgar despotism with which his civil agents would have wished him to be satisfied at home.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Conduct of Napoleon towards the Continent of Europe.

TWO very different plans of conduct presented themselves to Bonaparte when he was crowned Emperor of France. He might confine himself to the barrier of the Rhine and the Alps, which Europe did not dispute with him after the battle of Marengo, and render France, thus enlarged, the most powerful empire in the world. The example of constitutional liberty in France would have acted gradually, but with certainty, on the rest of Europe. It would no longer have been said that freedom is suitable only for England, because it is an island; or for Holland, because it is a plain; or for Switzerland, because it is a mountainous country; and a Continental monarchy would have been seen flourishing under the shadow of the law, than which there is nothing more holy upon earth, except the religion from which it emanates.

Many men of genius have exerted all their

efforts to do a little good, and to leave some traces of their institutions behind them. Destiny, in its prodigality towards Bonaparte, put into his hands a nation at that time containing forty millions of men, a nation whose amiable manners gave it a powerful influence on the opinions and taste of Europe. An able ruler, at the opening of the present century, might have rendered France happy and free without any effort, merely by a few virtues. Napoleon is guilty not less for the good which he has not done, than for the evils of which he is accused.

In short, if his devouring activity felt itself straitened in the finest monarchy in the world; if to be merely Emperor of France was too pitiful a lot for a Corsican, who, in 1790, was a subaltern, he should at least have stirred up Europe by the pretext of some great advantages to herself. The re-establishment of Poland, the independence of Italy, the deliverance of Greece, were schemes that had an air of grandeur; states might have felt an interest in the revival of other states. But was the earth to be inundated with blood, that Prince Jerome might fill the place of the Elector of Hesse; and that the Germans might be governed by French rulers, who took to them-

selves fiefs of which they could scarcely pronounce the titles, though they bore them; but on the revenues of which they easily laid hold in every language? Why should Germany have submitted to French influence? This influence communicated no new knowledge, and established no liberal institutions within her limits, except contributions and conscriptions still heavier than all that had been imposed by her ancient masters. There were, without doubt, many reasonable changes to be made in the constitutions of Germany; all enlightened men knew it; and for a long time accordingly they had shown themselves favourable to the cause of France, because they hoped to derive from her an improvement of their own condition. But without speaking of the just indignation which every people must feel at the sight of foreign soldiers in their territory, Bonaparte did nothing in Germany but with the view of establishing there his own power and that of his family: was such a nation made to serve as a footstool to his vanity? Spain too could not but reject with horror the perfidious means which Bonaparte employed to enslave her. What then did he offer to the empires which he wished to subjugate? Was it liberty? Was it strength? Was it riches? No, it was himself,

always himself, with whom the world was to be regaled in exchange for every earthly blessing.

The Italians, in the confused hope of being finally united in one state; the unfortunate Poles, who implore Hell as well as Heaven that they may again become a people, were the only nations who served the Emperor voluntarily. But he had such a horror for the love of liberty, that, though he needed the Poles as auxiliaries, he hated in them the noble enthusiasm which condemned them to obey him. This man, so able in the arts of dissimulation, could not avail himself even hypocritically of the patriotic sentiments from which he might have drawn so many resources; he could not handle such a weapon, and he was always afraid lest it should be shivered in his hand. At Posen, the Polish deputies came to offer him their fortunes and their lives for the re-establishment of Poland. Napoleon answered them with that gloomy voice, and that hurried declamation, which have been remarked in him when under constraint, consisting of a few words about liberty, well or ill put together, which cost him such an effort that it was the only lie which he could not pronounce with apparent ease. Even when the applauses of the people were in his

favour, the people were still disagreeable to him. This instinct of despotism made him raise a throne without foundation, and forced him to fail in what was his vocation here below, the establishment of political reform.

The means of the Emperor to enslave Europe were audacity in war and craft in peace. He signed treaties when his enemies were half beaten, that he might not drive them to despair, but yet weaken them so much, that the axe which remained in the trunk of the tree might cause it at length to perish. He gained some friends among the old sovereigns by showing himself in every thing the enemy of freedom. Accordingly, it was the nations who finally rose up against him; for he had offended them more even than kings. Yet it is surprising still to find partisans of Bonaparte elsewhere than among the French, to whom he at least gave victory as a compensation for despotism. His partisans, especially in Italy, were in general friends of liberty, who had erroneously flattered themselves with obtaining it from him, and who would still prefer any great event to the dejection into which they are now fallen. Without wishing to enter upon the interests of foreigners, of which we have determined not to speak, we may venture to affirm,

that the particular benefits conferred by Bonaparte, the high roads necessary to his projects, the monuments consecrated to his glory, some remains of the liberal institutions of the Constituent Assembly, of which he occasionally permitted the application out of France, such as the improvement of jurisprudence and public education, or the encouragements given to the sciences: all these benefits, desirable as they might be, could not compensate for the degrading yoke which weighed down the general character. What superior genius has been developed during his reign, or will be developed for a long time to come, in the countries where he ruled? If he had desired the triumph of a virtuous and discreet liberty, energy would have been displayed on every side, and a new impulse would have animated the civilized world. But Bonaparte has not procured for France the friendship of a single nation. He has made up marriages, rounded and united provinces, new-modelled geographical maps, and counted souls, in the manner since received, to complete the dominions of princes; but where has he implanted those political principles which are the ramparts, the treasures, and the glory of England? those institutions which are invincible after

a duration of even ten years; for they have by that time produced so much happiness, that they rally all the citizens of a country in their defence?

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Means employed by Bonaparte to attack England.

IF there is any glimpse of a plan in the truly incoherent proceedings of Bonaparte towards foreign nations, it was that of establishing an universal monarchy, of which he was to be declared the head, giving kingdoms and duchies as fiefs, and re-instituting the feudal system, as it was formerly established by conquest. It does not even appear that he meant to limit himself to the boundaries of Europe, and his views certainly reached as far as Asia. In short, his inclination was to march constantly forwards, as long as he met with no obstacles; but he had not calculated, that, in so vast an enterprise, an obstacle might not only arrest his progress, but entirely destroy the edifice of an unnatural prosperity, which would be annihilated the moment that it ceased to ascend.

To make the French nation support war, which, like all nations, desires peace, — to oblige foreign troops to follow the banners of

France, a motive was necessary, which might in appearance at least connect itself with the public good. We have endeavoured to show in the preceding chapter, that, if Napoleon had taken the liberty of nations for his standard, he would have aroused Europe, without employing the means of terror; but his imperial power would have gained nothing, and he certainly was not a man to conduct himself by disinterested sentiments. He wanted a rallying word which might produce a persuasion that he had the advantage and independence of Europe in view, and he chose *The Freedom of the Seas*. The perseverance and financial resources of the English were without doubt obstacles to his projects, and he had besides a natural aversion to their free institutions and the haughtiness of their character. But what was particularly convenient for him, was, instead of the doctrine of representative governments, founded on the respect due to nations, to substitute mercantile and commercial interests, on which men may speak without end, reason without limits, and never attain the object. The motto of the unfortunate periods of the French revolution, *Liberty and Equality*, gave the people an impulse which could not be agreeable to Bonaparte: but the motto of his banner—*The Liberty of the*

Seas—conducted him wherever he wished, and made the voyage to the Indies as necessary as the most reasonable peace, if such a peace should be suddenly for his advantage. Lastly, he had in these rallying words the singular advantage of animating the mind without directing it against power. M. de Gentz and M. A. W. de Schlegel, in their writings upon the continental system, have treated completely of the advantages and disadvantages of the maritime ascendency of England, when Europe is in its ordinary situation. But it is at least certain, that this ascendency, a few years ago, was the only balance to the dominion of Bonaparte, and that there would not have remained perhaps a single corner of the earth in which a sufferer could have escaped from his tyranny, if the English ocean had not encircled the Continent with its protecting arms.

But, it will be said, though we admire the English, yet France must always be the rival of their power; and at all times her leaders have endeavoured to combat them. There is only one way of equalling England; and that is by imitating her. If Bonaparte, instead of planning that ridiculous farce of an invasion, which has only served as a subject for English caricatures, and that continental blockade, a measure more se-

rious, but likewise more mischievous; if Bonaparte had wished only to become superior to England in her constitution and her industry, France would now be in possession of a commerce founded upon credit, and of a credit founded upon a national representation, and upon the stability which such a representation gives. But the English ministry is unluckily too well aware that a constitutional monarchy is the sole means of securing durable prosperity to France. When Louis XIV struggled successfully at sea against the English fleets, the financial riches of the two countries were then nearly the same; but since liberty has been consolidated in England for eighty or an hundred years, France cannot bring herself into equilibrium with her rival, except by legal securities of the same nature. Instead of taking this truth for his compass, what did Bonaparte do?

The gigantic idea of the continental blockade was like a species of European crusade against England, of which Napoleon's sceptre was the rallying sign. But if, in the interior, the exclusion of English merchandise gave some encouragement to manufacturers, the ports were deserted and commerce annihilated. Nothing rendered Napoleon more unpopular than

that increase in the price of sugar and coffee which affected the daily habits of all classes. By burning in the cities which were subject to him, from Hamburgh to Naples, the productions of English industry, he disgusted every witness of these *autos da fe* in honour of despotism. In the public square at Geneva, I saw some poor women throw themselves on their knees before the pile on which the merchandise was burning, with supplications that they might be allowed to snatch in time from the flames some pieces of cotton or woollen stuff to clothe their infants in misery. Such scenes must have occurred every where; and though statesmen, in an ironical style, then said that they were of no consequence, they were the living picture of a tyrannical absurdity—the continental system. What has been the result of the terrible anathema of Bonaparte? The power of England has increased in the four quarters of the globe, her influence over foreign governments has been unlimited, and it ought to be so, considering the magnitude of the evil from which she preserved Europe. Bonaparte, whom the world persists in calling able, has however found the awkward art of multiplying every where the resources of his adversaries, and in particular of so augmenting those of England, that he has

not been able to succeed in doing her more perhaps than one single injury (though that one perhaps is the greatest of all),—the injury of increasing her military forces to such a degree, that apprehensions might be entertained for her freedom, were it not that confidence may be placed in her public spirit.

It cannot be denied that it is very natural for France to envy the prosperity of England: and this sentiment has caused her to allow herself to be deceived with respect to Bonaparte's attempts to raise her industry to a level with that of her antagonist. But is it by armed prohibitions that riches are created? The will of sovereigns can no longer direct the system of commerce and industry among nations: they must be left to their natural developement, and their interests must be supported according to their own wishes. As a woman does not procure more homage to herself by being angry at that which is offered to her rival; so a nation can carry off the palm in commerce and industry only by finding means of attracting voluntary tributes, and not by proscribing competition.

The official gazette writers were ordered to insult the English nation and government. In the daily papers, absurd appellations, such as *perfidious islanders*, *avaricious merchants*, were

incessantly repeated, with occasional variations, which never deviated too far from the text. In some writings the authors went back as far as William the Conqueror, to characterize the battle of Hastings as a revolt, and ignorance rendered it easy for baseness to propagate the most pitiful calumnies. Bonaparte's journalists, to whom no one could reply, disfigured the history, the institutions, and the character of the English nation. This too is one of the scourges arising from the slavery of the press: France has undergone them all.

As Bonaparte had more respect for himself than for those who were under him; he sometimes in conversation allowed himself to say much good of England, either because he wished to prepare men's minds for a situation in which it would be convenient for him to treat with England, or rather because he wished to escape for a moment from the false language which he imposed upon his servants. It was as much as to say, *Let us make our people lie.*

CHAPTER XIV.

On the Spirit of the French Army.

IT must not be forgotten, that the French army was admirable during the first ten years of the war of the Revolution. The qualities which were wanting in the men employed in the civil career, were found in the military:—perseverance, devotedness, boldness, and even goodness, when their natural disposition was not altered by the impetuosity of attack. The soldiers and officers were often beloved in foreign countries, even where their arms had done mischief: not only did they meet death with that inconceivable energy which will at all times be found in their blood and their heart; but they supported the most horrid privations with unexampled serenity. The fickleness of which the French are justly accused in political affairs, becomes respectable, when it is transformed into indifference to danger, and even indifference to pain. The French soldiers smiled in the midst of the most painful situations, and encouraged one another in the

agonies of suffering, either by a sentiment of enthusiasm for their country, or by a witticism which rekindled the cheerful gaiety to which the very lowest classes of society in France are always alive.

The Revolution had brought the fatal art of recruiting to singular perfection; but the good which it had done, by rendering every rank accessible to merit, excited in the French army an unbounded emulation. It was to these principles of freedom that Bonaparte was indebted for the resources which he employed against liberty herself. Ere long the army under Napoleon retained little of its popular virtues, except its admirable valour, and a noble sentiment of national pride: but how much was it fallen, fighting for a single man, while its predecessors, while its own veterans, ten years before, had devoted themselves only for their country. Soon too the troops of almost every continental nation were forced to combat under the banners of France. What patriotic sentiment could animate the Germans, the Dutch, the Italians, when they had no security for the independence of their native land, or rather when its subjugation bore heavily upon them? They had no common tie, except one and the same leader; and on that account nothing was less

solid than their association; because enthusiasm for a man, be he who he may, is necessarily fluctuating: the love only of our country and of freedom cannot change, because it is disinterested in its principle. That which constituted the particular fascination of Napoleon, was the idea which was entertained of his fortune: attachment to him was attachment to one's self. A fond belief prevailed with respect to the various kinds of advantages to be obtained under his banners; and as he was both an admirable judge of military merit, and knew how to recompense it, any private soldier in the army might nourish the hope of becoming a marshal of France. Titles, births, the services of courtiers, had little influence on promotion in the army. There a spirit of equality prevailed in spite of the despotism of the government, because Bonaparte had need of force, which cannot exist without a certain degree of independence. Accordingly, under the Emperor, that which was of most value was assuredly the army. The commissaries, who afflicted the conquered countries with contributions, imprisonments, and exile; those clouds of civil agents, who came like vultures after the victory to pounce upon the field of battle, did much more to make the French detested, than

the poor gallant conscripts who passed from childhood to death in the belief that they were defending their country. It belongs to men skilled in the military art to pronounce upon Bonaparte's talents as a captain. But to judge of him in this respect merely by such observations as are within the reach of every body, it appears to me that his ardent selfishness perhaps contributed to his early triumphs as it did to his final reverses. In the career of arms, as well as in every other, he was destitute of that respect for men, and of that sentiment of duty, without which nothing great is durable.

Bonaparte, as a general, never spared the blood of his troops; he gained his astonishing victories by a prodigal waste of the soldiers which the Revolution had supplied. By marching without magazines, he rendered his movements uncommonly rapid, but he thus doubled the evils of war to the countries which were the theatre of action. In short, even the style of his military manœuvres has some connexion with the rest of his character: he always risks the whole for the whole, calculating on the faults of his enemies, whom he despises, and ready to sacrifice his partisans, for whom he cares little, if he does not by their means obtain the victory.

In the Austrian war, in 1809, he quitted the island of Lobau, when he judged the battle to be lost, and crossed the Danube in company only of Marshal Berthier, and M. de Czernitchef, one of the intrepid aides de camp of the Emperor of Russia. Bonaparte said to them, with undisturbed tranquillity, that after having gained forty battles, it was not extraordinary to lose one. When he reached the other side of the river, he went to bed, and slept till the morning of the following day, without inquiring after the fate of the French army, which his generals saved while he slept. What a singular trait of character! And yet in the greater part of important occasions there is no man more active or more bold. But it would appear that he cannot sail except with a favourable wind, and that misfortune freezes him completely, as if he had made a magical compact with fate, and was unable to proceed without her.

Posterity, nay, many of our contemporaries, will object to the adversaries of Bonaparte the enthusiasm with which he inspired his army. We will treat this subject as impartially as possible, when we shall have arrived at the fatal return from Elba. Who could deny that Bonaparte was in many respects a man of

transcendent genius? He saw as far as the knowledge of mischief can extend; but there is something beyond that—the region of good. Military talents are not always a proof of superior intellect: in the career of war many accidents may contribute to success; besides, that kind of quick survey of circumstances which is necessary for conducting men in the field of battle, has no resemblance to the close and accurate observation which the art of government requires. One of the greatest misfortunes of the human race is the impression which the success of force produces upon the mind. There will be neither liberty nor morality in the world, if we do not bring ourselves to consider a battle, like any other transaction in the world, merely according to the goodness of the cause and the utility of the result.

Bonaparte did a great mischief to France, in communicating a taste for luxury to those warriors, who were so well satisfied with glory in the days when the nation still existed. An intrepid marshal, covered with wounds, and impatient for more, demanded for his hotel a bed so covered with gilding and embroidery, that there was not to be found in Paris one that came up to his wishes. *Very well*, said he, in his peevishness, *give me a truss of straw, I shall sleep*

well enough upon it. In fact, there is no medium for these men between the pomp of the Arabian Nights' Entertainment, and the rigid life to which they were accustomed.

Bonaparte must likewise be accused of having altered the French character, by forming it to the habits of dissimulation, of which he gave the example. Many military leaders became diplomatists in the school of Napoleon, capable of concealing their true opinions, of studying circumstances, and of bending to them. Their courage remained the same: every thing else was changed. The officers, who were most about the person of the Emperor, far from having preserved the lively courtesy of the French, were become cold in their manners, circumspect, disdainful, they gave a slight salutation with the head, spoke little, and seemed to share their master's contempt for the human species. Soldiers have always generous and natural emotions; but the doctrine of passive obedience, which parties, opposite in their interests, though accordant in their maxims, have introduced among their chiefs, has necessarily altered all that was great and patriotic in the troops of France.

An armed force, it is said, ought to be essentially obedient. That is true in the field of

battle, in presence of the enemy, and in relation to military discipline. But could the French be ignorant [illegible] to have been ignorant, that they were sacrificing [illegible]ation in Spain? Was it possible, or was it right for them not to know, that at Moscow they were not defending their homes, and that Europe was in arms, only because Bonaparte had successively availed himself of every country in it to enslave the whole? Some persons entertain a wish to make the army a kind of corporation, separate from the nation, and incapable of union with it. In this case the unfortunate people would always have two enemies, their own troops and those of foreigners, since all the virtues of citizens are forbidden to warriors.

The army of England is as submissive to discipline as that of the most absolute state of Europe; but the officers do not therefore make less use of their reason, both as citizens, by taking part when they return home, in the public concerns of their country; and as soldiers, by knowing and respecting the empire of the law in what regards them. An English officer would not arrest an individual, nor fire upon the people in commotion, till the forms ordained by the constitution had been observed. There is an intention of despotism, whenever there

is a wish to forbid men to use the reason which God has given them. Obedience to their oath, it will be said, is sufficient; but what is there which requires the employment of reason, more than the knowledge of the duties attached to this very oath? Is it to be believed, that the oath taken to Bonaparte could oblige any officer to carry off the Duc d'Enghien from the foreign land which ought to have been an asylum to him? Whenever maxims opposed to liberal sentiments are established, it is for the purpose of using them as a battery against our adversaries, but on condition that these adversaries do not employ them in return against us. It is only knowledge and justice which gives no ground of apprehension to any party. What then is the result of this emphatical maxim: *The army should not judge, but obey?* The result is, that in civil troubles the army always determines the lot of empires, but determines ill, because it is excluded from the use of reason. It was in consequence of this blind obedience to its leaders, which the French army had been taught to esteem a duty, that it supported the government of Bonaparte; yet how much has it been blamed for not overturning his power! Civil bodies, to justify their servility to the Emperor, laid the blame upon the

army; and it is easy to make the partisans of absolute power, who usually are not very strict logicians, say in the same breath, first that military men should never have an opinion upon a political subject, and next, that they are very blameable for having lent themselves as instruments to the unjust wars of Bonaparte. Surely those who shed their blood for the state have some right to know whether it is for the state that they really do fight. Not that the army should be the government;—Heaven defend us from such an evil. But if the army ought to keep itself apart from all public affairs in all that concerns their habitual direction, the freedom of the country is not the less under its protection; and when despotism endeavours to obtain the mastery, it should refuse to support it. What! it will be said, would you have the army deliberate? If you give the name of deliberation to a knowledge of its duty, and to the employment of its faculties in fulfilling its obligations, I shall reply, that if you forbid it to-day to reason against your orders, you will be dissatisfied to-morrow that it did not reason against the orders of another. All the parties which require, in politics as in faith, the renunciation of the exercise of thought, mean only that, whatever happens, we should think as they do. Yet,

when soldiers are transformed into machines, we have no right to complain if these machines yield to force. In governing men, it is impossible to succeed without the influence of opinion. The army, like every other association, ought to know that it constitutes a part of a free state, and that it ought to defend the constitution established by law for and against all. Must not the French army bitterly repent at this day of that blind obedience to its chief which has ruined France? If the soldiers had not ceased to be citizens, they would still have been the support of their country.

It must be allowed, however, and with sincerity, that regular troops are an unhappy invention; and if they could be suppressed at once throughout the whole of Europe, mankind would have made a great step towards the perfection of social order. Had Bonaparte stopped in his career after some of his victories, his name and the reputation of the French armies produced at that time such an effect, that he might have been satisfied with the national guards for the defence of the Rhine and the Alps. Every advantage in human affairs was at his disposal: but the lesson which he was destined to give to the world was of another nature.

At the time of the last invasion of France, a general of the Allies declared, that every French private citizen would be shot who should be found with arms in his hand: some of the French generals had occasionally been guilty of the same injustice in Germany: and yet the soldiers in armies of the line have much less interest in the fate of defensive war than the inhabitants of the country. Were it true, as this general said, that citizens are not permitted to defend themselves against regular troops, all the Spaniards would be guilty, and Europe would be still subject to Bonaparte: for, it must not be forgotten, that the private inhabitants of Spain were the first who commenced the struggle; they were the first who thought that the probability of success was nothing, when it was a duty to resist. None of these Spaniards, and, at a subsequent period, none of the Russian peasants, formed part of the regular troops: yet this circumstance only rendered them more worthy of our admiration, for the firmness with which they fought for the independence of their country.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the Legislation and Administration under Bonaparte.

THE unlimited despotism and the shameless corruption of the civil government under Bonaparte has not yet been sufficiently delineated. It might be supposed that, after the torrent of abuse which is always poured forth in France against the vanquished, there would remain no ill to be spoken against a fallen power, which the flatterers of the dominion that succeeded have not exhausted. But as they who attacked Bonaparte wished still to spare the doctrine of despotism; as many of those who load him with reproach to-day had praised him yesterday, they were obliged, in order to introduce some consistency into conduct in which nothing is systematic except baseness, to carry their outrages even beyond what the man deserves, and yet in many respects to observe a prudent silence on a system which they wished still to be continued. The greatest crime of Napoleon, however, that for which every reflecting man,

every writer qualified to be the dispenser of glory among posterity, will never cease to accuse him before mankind, was the mode in which he established and organized despotism. He founded it on immorality; for so much knowledge was diffused through France, that absolute power, which elsewhere rests on ignorance, could there be maintained only by corruption.

Is it possible to speak of legislation in a country where the will of a single man decided every thing—where this man, uncertain and fluctuating as the billows of the ocean during a tempest, was unable to endure the barriers of his own will, if the regulation of the evening was opposed to the next day's desire of change? A counsellor of state once thought proper to represent to him that the resolution which he was about to take was inconsistent with the Code Napoleon. *Very well*, said he, *the Code Napoleon was made for the welfare of the people; and if that welfare requires other measures, we must adopt them.* What a pretext for unlimitted power is the public welfare! Robespierre did well in giving that name to his government. Shortly after the death of the Duc d'Enghien, while Bonaparte was still troubled at the bottom of his soul by the horror which that assassina-

tion had excited, he said, in a conversation upon literature with an artist very capable of forming a judgment upon the subject: "Reason of state, do you observe, has with the moderns supplied the place of the fatalism of the ancients. Corneille is the only French tragic writer who has felt this truth. Had he lived in my time, I would have made him my prime minister."

There were two kinds of instruments of imperial power, laws and decrees. The laws received the sanction of the semblance of a Legislative Body; but the real exercise of authority was to be found in the decrees which emanated directly from the Emperor, and were discussed in his council. Napoleon left the fine speakers of the Council of State, and the mute deputies of the Legislative Body, to deliberate and decide on some abstract questions in jurisprudence, with the view of giving his government a false air of philosophical wisdom. But when laws relative to the exercise of power were concerned, all the exceptions, as well as all the rules, were under the jurisdiction of the Emperor. In the Code Napoleon, and even in the criminal code, some good principles remain, derived from the Constituent Assembly; the institution of juries, for instance, the anchor of French Hope—and several improve-

ments in the mode of proceedure, which have brought that branch of jurisprudence out of the darkness in which it lay before the Revolution, and in which it still lies in several states of Europe. But of what value were legal institutions, when extraordinary tribunals named by the Emperor, special courts, and military commissions, judged all political offences—the very offences in which the unchangeable ægis of the law is most required. In the succeeding volume we shall show how the English have multiplied precautions in political prosecutions, to protect justice more efficaciously from the encroachments of power. What examples has not Bonaparte's reign exhibited of those extraordinary tribunals, which became habitual! for when one arbitrary act is permitted, the poison spreads itself through all the affairs of the state. Have not rapid and dark executions polluted the soil of France? The military code in all countries, except England, interferes too much with the civil; but under Bonaparte the slightest charge that could be interpreted into an interference even with the enlistment, was sufficient to bring the accused before a military commission. It was thus that the Duc d'Enghien was tried. Bonaparte never once left a political offence to the decision of a

jury. General Moreau, and those who were accused along with him, were deprived of that right; but they were fortunately brought before judges who respected their conscience. These judges, however, were not able to prevent the perpetration of iniquities in that horrible trial; and the torture was introduced anew in the nineteenth century by a national chief, whose power ought to have emanated from opinion.

Under the reign of Bonaparte, it was difficult to distinguish legislative measures from measures of administration; because both were equally dependant on the supreme authority. On this subject, however, we shall make one leading observation. Whenever the improvements, of which the different branches of the government were susceptible, in no respect struck at the power of Bonaparte, but on the contrary promoted his plans and his glory, he made, in order to effect them, an able use of the immense resources which the dominion of nearly all Europe gave him: and as he possessed a great talent for discovering, among a number of men, those who could be useful instruments of service to him, he generally employed persons very well qualified for the affairs with the care of which they were entrusted. We owe to the imperial government the museums of the arts

and the embellishments of Paris, high roads, canals which facilitate the mutual communications of the departments; in short, all that could strike the imagination by showing, as in the Simplon and Mont Cenis, that nature obeyed Bonaparte with almost as much docility as men. These various prodigies were accomplished, because he could cause to bear on any particular point the taxes and the labour of eighty millions of men: but the kings of Egypt, and the Roman emperors, had, in this respect, equally great titles to glory. In what country did Bonaparte take any concern about the moral development of the people? What means, on the contrary, did he not employ in France to stifle the public spirit which had grown up in spite of the bad governments to which faction had given birth?

All the local authorities in the provinces were gradually suppressed or annulled; there remains in France only one focus of movement—Paris: and the instruction which arises from emulation faded away to nothing in the provinces, while the carelessness with which the schools were kept up completed the consolidation of that ignorance which agrees so well with slavery. Yet as those who are endowed with intellect feel the necessity of exerting it, all who had any talent

repaired immediately to the capital to endeavour to obtain places. Hence proceeds that rage for being employed and pensioned by the state, which degrades and devours France. If men had any thing to do at home; if they could take a share in the administration of their city or department; if they had an opportunity of making themselves useful there, of gaining consideration, and of cheering themselves with the hope of being one day elected a deputy; we should not see every one hastening to Paris, who can flatter himself with prevailing over his rivals by an intrigue or a flattery the more.

No employment was left to the free choice of the citizens. Bonaparte took delight in issuing decrees concerning the nomination of door-keepers and sergeants, dated from the first capitals in Europe. He wished to exhibit himself as present every where, as sufficient for every thing; in fine, as the sole governing being upon earth. It was, however, only by the tricks of a mountebank that a man could succeed in multiplying himself to such a degree; for the substance of power always falls into the hands of the subaltern agents, who exercise the details of despotism. In a country where there is neither any intermediate independent body, nor freedom of the press, there is one thing

which a despot, whatever be the superiority of his genius, can never know; and that is the truth which would be disagreeable to him.

Commerce, credit, all that demands spontaneous activity in the nation, and a sure defence against the caprices of government, were ill adapted to the system of Bonaparte. The contributions of foreign countries were its only basis. By treating the public debt with respect, an appearance of good faith was given to the government, at the same time that the sum was too small to impose much restraint. But the other creditors of the public treasury knew that their payment or non-payment was to be considered as a chance, on the determination of which their right was the circumstance which had the least influence. Accordingly nobody thought of lending to the state, however powerful its chief might be; and for the very reason that he was too powerful. The revolutionary decrees, accumulated during fifteen years of disorder, were taken or let alone according to the exigency of the moment. On every affair there was generally one law on this side, and another on that, which the ministers applied according to their convenience. Sophisms, which were a mere article of superfluity, since authority was

all powerful, justified by turns the most opposite measures.

What a shameful establishment was that of the police! This political inquisition has in modern times taken the place of religious inquisition. Was the chief beloved, who needed to weigh down the nation with such a bondage? He made use of some to accuse others, and boasted of practising the old maxim of dividing in order to command, which, thanks to the progress of human reason, is now an artifice very easily discovered. The revenue of this police was worthy of its employment. The gaming houses of Paris supplied the funds for its support: and thus it hired vice with the money of the vice which paid it. It escaped public animadversion by the mystery which enveloped it: but when chance brought into open day a prosecution, in which the agents of the police were in some way concerned, is it possible to conceive any thing more disgusting, more perfidious, or more mean, than the disputes which arose between these wretches? Sometimes they declared that they had professed one opinion, to make use secretly of the opposite; sometimes they boasted of the snares which they had prepared to induce malcontents to

conspire, with the view of betraying them as soon as a conspiracy was formed: and yet the depositions of such men were received by the tribunals. The unfortunate invention of this police has since been directed against the partisans of Bonaparte in their turn: had they not reason to think that it was the bull of Phalaris, of which, after having conceived the fatal idea of it, they were themselves undergoing the punishment?

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Literature under Bonaparte.

THIS very police, for which we have not terms contemptuous enough, terms which put a sufficient distance between an honest man and the creature who could enter into such a den, was entrusted by Bonaparte with the charge of directing the public mind in France. In fact, when there is no freedom of the press, and when the censorial power of the police does not confine itself to the imposition of a restraint, but dictates to a whole people the opinions which they are to entertain on politics, on religion, on morals, on books, and on individuals, into what a state must a nation fall which has no other nourishment for its reflections than that which despotic authority permits or prepares? We have therefore no reason to be surprised at the degradation of literature and literary criticism in France. There is certainly nowhere more talent or more quickness in attaining proficiency, than among the French. We may see what astonishing progress they are constantly making in the sciences

and in erudition, because those two paths have no connexion with politics; whilst literature can now produce nothing great without liberty. The master-pieces of the age of Louis XIV will be adduced in opposition to us: but the slavery of the press was much less severe under that sovereign, than under Bonaparte. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV, Fenelon, and other reflecting men, were already engaged in the discussion of questions essential to the interests of society. Poetical genius in every country exhausts itself periodically, and revives only at certain intervals. But the art of prose composition, which is inseparable from thought, embraces necessarily the whole philosophical sphere of ideas; and when men of letters are doomed to wheel about in madrigals and idyls, the dizziness of flattery soon seizes them; and they can produce nothing that will pass beyond the suburbs of the capital and the boundaries of the present time.

The task imposed on writers under Bonaparte was singularly difficult. They were to combat with fury the liberal principles of the Revolution, but were to respect all the interests which depended on it: so that liberty was annihilated, while the titles, estates, and offices of the revolutionists were sacred. Bonaparte one day said,

speaking of J. J. Rousseau, *He was the cause of the Revolution. For my part, I have no reason to complain of him; for it was in the Revolution that I caught the throne.* Such was the language which was to serve as a text for writers to sap incessantly constitutional laws, and the everlasting rights on which they are founded, and yet exalt the despotic conqueror who had been produced by the storms of the Revolution and had afterwards hushed them into a calm. When religion was concerned, Bonaparte seriously declared in his proclamations, that France should distrust the English, because they were heretics; but when he wished to justify the persecutions which had been endured by the most venerable and the most moderate of the heads of the church, Pope Pius VII. he accused him of fanaticism. The watchword was, to denounce as a partisan of anarchy whoever published any kind of philosophical opinion; but if a noble seemed to insinuate that the ancient princes were more skilful than the new in the dignity of courts, he was without fail marked out as a conspirator. In fine, it was necessary to reject all that was valuable in every system of opinions, to make up the worst of human plagues, tyranny in a civilised country.

Some writers have endeavoured to frame an

abstract theory of despotism, in order, if I may say so, to whitewash it anew, and so give it an air of philosophical novelty. Others, on behalf of the upstart men, have plunged into Machiavelism, as if depth were to be found there; and have held up the power of the creatures of the Revolution in the light of a sufficient security against the return of the old government, as if there were only interests in the world, and the career of the human species had no connexion with virtue. All that remains of these legerdemain exhibitions is a certain combination of phrases, unsupported by any substantial idea, and yet duly constructed according to the rules of grammar, with verbs, nominatives, and accusatives. *The paper is the only sufferer*, said a man of wit. Doubtless it is the only sufferer: men retain no remembrance of sophisms; and fortunately for the dignity of literature, no monument of this noble art can be raised on false bases. The accents of truth are essential to eloquence, just principles to reasoning, courage of soul to the impetuous excursions of genius; and nothing of this is to be found in writers who follow the direction of force, from whatever point of the compass it may blow.

The journals were filled with addresses to the Emperor, with the excursions of the Emperor,

with those of the princes and princesses, with ceremonies and presentations at court. These journals, faithful to the spirit of servitude, contrived to be insipid at the very moment of the subversion of the world; and had it not been for the official bulletins, which came from time to time to inform us that the half of Europe was conquered, we might have believed that we were living under arbours of flowers, and that we had nothing better to do than to count the steps of their Imperial Majesties and Highnesses, and to repeat the gracious words which they had condescended to let fall upon the head of their prostrate subjects. Was it thus that men of letters, and magistrates capable of thought, should have conducted themselves in the presence of posterity?

Some persons, however, tried to print books under the censorship of the police; what was the consequence? a persecution like that which forced me to fly by Moscow to seek an asylum in England. The bookseller Palm was shot in Germany for having refused to name the author of a pamphlet which he had printed. And, if more numerous examples of proscriptions cannot be quoted, the reason is, that despotism was exerted so strongly, that at last all submitted to it, as to those terrible laws of nature,

disease and death. It was not merely the endless rigours to which you were exposed under so persevering a tyranny; but you could enjoy no literary glory in your own country, when journals, as numerous as under a free government, and yet all following abjectly the same language, teazed you with the witticisms which were prescribed to them. For my part I have furnished the burden of the song to the French journalists for fifteen years—the melancholy of the North, the perfectibility of the human species, the muses of romance, the muses of Germany. The yoke of authority, and the spirit of imitation, were imposed upon literature, as the official journal dictated the articles of faith in politics. The sagacious instinct of despotism made the agents of the literary police feel, that originality in the manner of writing may conduct to independence of character; and that great care must be taken not to suffer English and German books to be introduced into Paris, if it is meant to check the French writers, while they observe the rules of taste, from keeping pace with the progress of the human mind in countries where civil troubles have not retarded its advancement.

Finally, of all the pains which the slavery of the press can inflict, the bitterest is to see what

you most love or most respect insulted in the public papers, without the possibility of procuring the insertion of a reply in the same gazettes, which are necessarily more popular than books. What cowardice to attack the grave, when the friends of the deceased cannot take up their defence! What cowardice in the emissaries of slander, when backed by authority, to attack the living too, and to serve as a vanguard to all the proscriptions, of which absolute power, when the least suspicion is suggested to it, is so prodigal. What a style is that which bears the seal of the police. When we read, by the side of this arrogance and meanness, the discourses of Englishmen or Americans, of public men, in short, who, in addressing other men, seek only to impress upon them their sincere conviction, we felt ourselves moved as if the voice of a friend had all at once reached the ear of a forsaken being who knew not where to find a fellow creature.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Saying of Bonaparte printed in the Moniteur.

IT was not enough that every act of Bonaparte should bear the stamp of a despotism becoming always more audacious; it was further necessary that he himself, from contempt of mankind, should reveal the secret of his own government. In the Moniteur of the month of July, 1810, he caused these words to be inserted, addressed to his brother Louis Bonaparte's second son, who was then destined to be Grand Duke of Berg. *Never forget*, says he, *in whatever situation my politics and the interest of my empire may place you, that your first duties are to me, your second to France; and that all your other duties, even your duties towards the people whom I may have entrusted to your care, come only afterwards.* This is no libel, it is not the opinion of a faction: it is the man himself, it is Bonaparte in person, who brings against himself a severer accusation than posterity would ever have dared to do. Louis XIV was accused of hav-

ing said in private, *I am the state;* and enlightened historians have with justice grounded themselves upon this language in condemning his character. But if, when that monarch placed his grandson on the throne of Spain, he had publickly taught him the same doctrine that Bonaparte taught his nephew, perhaps even Bossuet would not have dared to prefer the interests of kings to those of nations. He who chose thus to substitute his gigantic *self* in the place of the human species was a man chosen by the people—a man whom the friends of freedom for an instant mistook as the representative of their cause. Many have said, he is the child of the Revolution; yes, without doubt; but a parricidal child: ought they then to acknowledge him?

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the political Doctrine of Bonaparte.

ONE day M. Suard, who, more than any other lettered Frenchman, united the tact of literature with a knowledge of the great world, was speaking boldly before Bonaparte of the picture of the Roman emperors in Tacitus: "Very well," said Napoleon; "but he ought to have told us why the Roman people suffered, and even liked those bad emperors. It is that which it was of importance to explain to posterity." Let it be our endeavour not to incur, with respect to the Emperor of France himself, the censure which he passed on the Roman historian.

The two principal causes of Napoleon's power in France were, above all, his military glory, and the art with which he re-established order, without attacking those selfish passions to which the Revolution had given birth. But every thing was not included in these two problems.

It is pretended that, in discussions in the Council of State, Napoleon displayed a univer-

sal sagacity. I have some doubts of the ability ascribed to a man who is all-powerful; we plain people in private life earn our celebrity at a much dearer rate. One is not, however, master of Europe during fifteen years, without having a piercing view of men and things. But there was in the mind of Bonaparte an incoherence, which is a marked feature of those who do not range their thoughts under the law of duty. The power of commanding had been given by nature to Bonaparte; but it was rather because other men did not act upon him, than because he acted upon them, that he became their master. The qualities of which he was destitute served his purpose as well as the talents he possessed; and he made himself obeyed, only by degrading those whom he subjected. His successes are astonishing; his reverses more astonishing still. What he performed, aided by the energy of the nation, is admirable: the state of torpor in which he left it can scarcely be conceived. The multitude of men of talents whom he employed is extraordinary; but the characters whom he debased have done more harm to the cause of liberty than the service that could be rendered to it by all the powers of intelligence. To him, above all, may be applied the fine image of despotism,

in the " Spirit of Laws ;" " he cut up the tree by its roots to obtain its fruit," and perhaps he has even dried up the soil.

In a word, Bonaparte, the absolute master of eighty millions of men, and meeting nowhere with opposition, knew neither how to found a single institution in the state, nor durable power for himself. What then was the destructive principle which haunted his triumphal steps? What was it?—the contempt of mankind, and consequently of all the laws, all the studies, all the establishments, and all the elections of which the basis is respect for the human race. Bonaparte was intoxicated with the vile draught of Machiavelism ; he resembled in many respects the Italian tyrants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries ; and as he had read but little, the natural tendency of his character was not counteracted, by the effect of information. The middle ages being the most brilliant era in the history of the Italians, many of them have but too much respect for the maxims of government at that period, and those maxims were all collected by Machiavel.

Reading lately in Italy his famous treatise of *The Prince,* which still finds believers among the possessors of power, a new fact and a new conjecture appeared to me worthy of notice.

In the first place, letters of Machiavel, found in the manuscripts of the Barberini library, and published in 1813, prove clearly that he published his *Prince* in order to reconcile himself with the Medicis. They had put him to the rack on account of his efforts in favour of liberty; he was ruined, in bad health, and without resources: he gave up his principles, but it was after having been put to the torture; —in our days, people yield to slighter things.

This treatise of *The Prince*, where we find unhappily that superiority of mind which Machiavel had displayed in a better cause, was not composed, as has been believed, to render despotism odious, by showing the frightful resources which despots must employ to maintain their authority. This supposition is too refined to be admitted. I am inclined to think that Machiavel, detesting above every thing the yoke of foreigners in Italy, tolerated, and even encouraged the means, whatever they were, which the princes of the country could employ, in order to be masters; hoping that they would one day be powerful enough to repulse the German and French troops. Machiavel analyzes the art of war in his writings like a military man; he reverts continually to the necessity of a military organization entirely national;

and if he sullied his reputation by his indulgence for the crimes of the Borgias, it was perhaps because he felt too strongly the desire of attempting every means of recovering the independence of his country. Bonaparte did not certainly examine the *Prince* of Machiavel in this point of view; but he sought there what still passes for profound wisdom with vulgar minds, the art of deceiving mankind. This policy must fall in proportion to the extension of knowledge, as the belief in witchcraft has fallen since the true laws of natural philosophy have been discovered.

A general principle, whatever it might be, was displeasing to Bonaparte, as a thing foolish or hostile. He listened only to the considerations of the moment, and examined things merely with a view to their immediate utility; for he would have wished to stake the whole world in an annuity on his own life. He was not sanguinary, but indifferent respecting the lives of men, considering them but as a means of attaining his end, or as an obstacle to be removed out of his way. He was even less irascible than he often seemed to be: he wished to terrify by his words, in order to spare himself the act by the threat. Every thing with him was means, or end; nothing involuntary

was to be found either in good or evil. It is pretended that he said, "I have so many conscripts to expend by the year;" and it is probable that he held that language; for Bonaparte had contempt enough for his hearers to delight in a kind of sincerity which is nothing less than impudence.

He never believed in exalted sentiments, either in individuals or in nations; he considered the expression of these sentiments as hypocrisy. He believed that he held the key of human nature by fear and by hope, skilfully presented to the selfish and the ambitious. It must be allowed that his perseverance and activity were never slackened in behalf of the slightest interests of despotism; but it was that very despotism which was destined one day to fall upon his head. An anecdote, in which I happened to have some share, may give an additional idea of the system of Bonaparte relative to the art of governing.

The Duke of Melzi, who was for some time Vice-president of the Cisalpine Republic, was one of the most distinguished characters which Italy, so fertile in every production, has brought forth. Born of a Spanish mother, and an Italian father, he blended the dignity of one nation with the vivacity of the other; and I am not

sure whether even in France, a man could be cited more remarkable for his powers of conversation, and for the more important and essential talent of knowing and appreciating all those who acted a political part in Europe. The First Consul was obliged to employ him, because he had the greatest influence over his fellow-citizens, and because his attachment to his country was unquestioned. Bonaparte did not like to make use of men who were disinterested, and whose principles, whatever they might be, were not to be shaken; he was therefore continually circumventing Melzi, in order to corrupt him.

Having caused himself to be crowned King of Italy, in 1805, Bonaparte went to the Legislative Body of Lombardy, and informed the Assembly that he had the intention of giving a considerable estate to the Duke of Melzi, as a testimony of public gratitude towards him: this, he hoped, would render him unpopular. Being then at Milan, I saw that same evening M. de Melzi, who was quite in despair at the perfidious trick that Napoleon had played him, without having given him the slightest warning. As Bonaparte would have been irritated by a refusal, I advised M. de Melzi to appropriate instantly to a public establishment the revenues

with which he was thus overwhelmed. He followed my advice, and the next day, walking with the Emperor, he told him that such was his intention. Bonaparte, seizing him by the arm, exclaimed, "This, I would wager, is an idea of Madame de Staël; but take my advice, and do not give into the romantic philanthropy of the eighteenth century; there is only one thing to do in this world: that is to get continually more money, and more power; all the rest is chimerical." Many people will say that he was right; I think, on the contrary, that history will show that by establishing this doctrine, by setting men loose from the ties of honour, every where but on the field of battle, he prepared his partisans to abandon him, according to his own precepts, when he should cease to be the strongest; and indeed he may well boast of having met with more disciples faithful to his system, than adherents devoted to his misfortunes. He consecrated his policy by fatalism, the only religion suitable to this devotedness to fortune; and his prosperity constantly increasing, he ended by making himself the high-priest and idol of his own adoration, believing in himself, as if his desires were presages, and his designs oracles.

The duration of the power of Bonaparte was

a perpetual lesson of immorality. If he had always succeeded, what should we have been able to say to our children? There would have been left, it is true, the solace of religious resignation; but the mass of the inhabitants of the world would have sought in vain to discover the intentions of Providence in human affairs.

Nevertheless, in 1811, the Germans still called Bonaparte the man of fate, and the imagination even of some Englishmen was dazzled by his extraordinary talents. Poland and Italy still hoped for independence from him, and the daughter of the Cæsars had become his consort. This signal honour caused him a transport of joy, foreign to his nature; and for some time it might be believed that his illustrious partner would change the character of the man with whom destiny had connected her. Even at this time, Bonaparte wanted but one good sentiment to have become the greatest monarch upon earth; either that of paternal affection, which induces men to take care of the inheritance of their children; or pity for the French who rushed to death for him whenever he gave the signal; or equity towards foreign nations who gazed at him with wonder; or, in short, that kind of prudence natural to every

man, towards the middle of life, when he sees the approach of the vast shadows by which he must soon be enveloped: one virtue, one single virtue would have sufficed to have fixed all human prosperity on the head of Bonaparte. But the divine spark dwelt not in his heart.

The triumph of Bonaparte in Europe, as well as in France, was founded on a great equivocation, which endures with a number of people. The nations persisted in considering him the defender of their rights, at the very moment when he was their greatest enemy. The strength of the French Revolution, of which he had been the inheritor, was immense, because it was composed of the will of the French, and of the secret desires of other nations. Napoleon made use of this power against the old governments during several years, before the people discovered that their interest was not his object. The same names still subsisted: it was still France, lately the centre of popular principles; and although Bonaparte destroyed republics, and stimulated kings and princes to acts of tyranny, in opposition even to their own natural moderation, it was yet believed that all this would end in liberty; and he often himself talked of a constitution, at least when speaking of the reign of his son. The first step that

Bonaparte made towards his ruin was the enterprize on Spain; for he there met with a national resistance, the only one from which no corruption or diplomatic art could set him free. He had not suspected the danger which awaited his army in a war of villages and mountains; he believed not in the power of the soul; he counted bayonets, and there being scarcely any in Spain before the arrival of the English troops, he had not learned to dread the only invincible power—the enthusiasm of a whole nation. *The French*, said Bonaparte, *are nervous machines*, by which he meant to explain that mixture of obedience and mutability, which constitutes their character. This reproach is perhaps well-founded; but amidst these defects, they have displayed an invincible perseverance during nearly thirty years; and it was because Bonaparte flattered their ruling passion, that he reigned. The French long believed that the imperial government would preserve them from the institutions of the old *regime*, which to them are peculiarly odious. They also long confounded the cause of the Revolution with that of a new master; many people with good intentions suffered themselves to be deluded by this motive; others held the same language,

though they had no longer the same opinion; and it was long before the nation lost its interest in Bonaparte. But from that moment forward an abyss was hollowed under his steps.

CHAPTER XIX.

Intoxication of Power; Reverses and Abdication of Bonaparte.

"I AM tired of this old Europe," said Napoleon, before his departure for Russia. He met indeed no where any obstacle to his will; and the restlessness of his character required a new aliment. Perhaps also the strength and clearness of his judgment were impaired, when he saw men and things bending before him in such a manner, that it became no longer necessary for him to exercise his thoughts upon any of the difficulties of life. There is in unlimited power a kind of giddiness which seizes on genius as on stupidity, and overthrows them both alike.

The oriental etiquette which Bonaparte had established in his court, intercepted that kind of knowledge which is acquired amidst the easy communications of society. When there were four hundred people in his saloon, a blind man might have thought himself alone, so deep was the silence that prevailed. The marshals of

France, amidst the fatigues of war, at the moment of the crisis of a battle, used to enter the tent of the Emperor to ask his orders, without being allowed to sit down. His family did not suffer less than strangers from his despotism and his pride. Lucien preferred living a prisoner in England, to reigning under the orders of his brother. Louis Bonaparte, whose character is generally esteemed, was constrained by his probity to renounce the throne of Holland; and can it be believed, that when conversing with his brother during two hours by themselves, and that brother obliged by indisposition to lean painfully against the wall, Napoleon never offered him a chair: he used to continue standing himself, from the fear that any one should think of using the familiarity with him of sitting in his presence.

The dread which he inspired in later times was such, that nobody dared to address him first upon any subject. Sometimes he conversed with the greatest simplicity, surrounded by his court, and in his council of state. He suffered, and even encouraged contradiction upon administrative, or judicial affairs, which had no connexion with his power. It was curious to remark how sensibly those persons were affected, whom he had suffered for a moment

to breathe freely; but when the master re-appeared, it was in vain to ask the ministers to present a report to the Emperor against an unjust measure. Did it relate to the victim of some error, to some individual, caught by accident in that great net thrown over the human race—the agents of power would object the difficulty of addressing Napoleon, as if he had been the great Lama. Such a stupor caused by power would have raised a smile, if the situation of men without refuge under this despotism had not inspired the deepest pity.

The compliments, the hymns, the adorations, without number, and without measure, which filled his journals, might have tired a man of such transcendent mind; but the despotism of his character was stronger than his reason. He liked true praise less than base flattery; because the one only showed his merit, whilst the other attested his authority. In general he preferred power to glory; for the exertion of power pleased him too much to make him think of posterity, on whom it cannot act. But one of the results of absolute power, which contributed the most to precipitate Bonaparte from his throne, was, that by degrees no one dared to state to him the truth on any subject. He ended by not knowing that it was cold at Mos-

cow in November, because there could be found no one among his courtiers who had enough of the Roman to inform him of a thing so simple.

In 1811, Napoleon had inserted, and disavowed at the same time, in the Moniteur, a private note, printed in the English papers as having been addressed by his Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador of Russia. It was there said that Europe could enjoy no peace so long as England and its constitution subsisted. Whether this note was authentic or not, it bore at least the stamp of the school of Napoleon, and certainly expressed his ideas. An instinct which he could not account for, taught him that, so long as a centre of justice and liberty existed in the world, the tribunal which was to pass sentence upon him held its permanent sittings.

Bonaparte connected perhaps with the wild idea of the war of Russia that of the conquest of Turkey, of a return into Egypt, and of some attempts on the English establishments in India. Such were the gigantic plans with which he marched for the first time to Dresden, dragging after him the armies of all the Continent of Europe, whom he obliged to march against the powerful nation situated on the limit of

Asia. Pretexts were of small importance to a man who had attained such a degree of power: still it was necessary to adopt a phrase on the expedition to Russia, which the courtier might use as the word of command. This phrase was, that *France was obliged to make war on Russia, because that power did not maintain the Continental blockade against England.* Now, at this very time, Bonaparte himself was continually granting licences at Paris, for exchanges with the merchants of London; and the Emperor of Russia might with more propriety have declared war against him for violating the treaty by which they had mutually engaged to hold no commercial intercourse with England. But who would now take the trouble of justifying such a war? No one; not even Bonaparte; for his respect for success is such, that he must condemn himself for having incurred such great reverses.

Nevertheless, the feeling of admiration and terror which Bonaparte inspired, was so great, that little doubt was entertained of his triumph. While he was at Dresden, in 1812, surrounded by all the sovereigns of Germany, at the head of an army of five hundred thousand men, composed of almost all the nations of Europe, it seemed impossible, according to human calcula-

tion, that his expedition should fail of success. In his fall indeed, the intervention of Providence has been more manifested to the world than in any other event; and the elements were first employed to strike the ruler of men. At present we can hardly prevent figuring to ourselves, that if Bonaparte had succeeded in his expedition against Russia, there would not have been a single corner of Continental ground where one would have been sheltered from his power. All the ports were shut, and the Continent was, like the tower of Ugolino, walled up on all sides.

Threatened with imprisonment by a prefect, extremely docile to power, if I showed the least intention of withdrawing for a day from my dwelling, I escaped when Bonaparte was just entering into Russia, fearing I should find no outlet in Europe if I deferred my project any longer. I had already but two ways of going to England, by Constantinople or by St. Petersburg. The war between Russia and Turkey rendered the road by the latter almost impracticable; I knew not what would become of me, when the Emperor Alexander had the goodness to send me a passport to Vienna. On entering his empire, acknowledged as absolute, I felt myself free for the first time since the reign of

Bonaparte; not only on account of the personal virtues of the Emperor Alexander, but because Russia was the only country which Napoleon had not compelled to feel his influence. None of the old governments can be compared to that tyranny which is engrafted upon a revolution; a tyranny which had employed even the extension of knowledge to rivet the fetters of every species of liberty.

It is my intention at a future day to write what I observed of Russia; I shall here only remark, without turning from my subject, that it is a country little known, because almost all we have seen of that nation is a small number of courtiers, whose defects are always greater in proportion as the power of a monarch is less limited. They are distinguished, for the most part, only by that intrepid bravery common to all classes; but the Russian peasantry, that numerous class of the nation, whose knowledge does not extend beyond the earth they cultivate and the heavens they contemplate, have qualities that are really admirable. Their mildness, their hospitality, their natural elegance, are remarkable; no danger exists in their eyes, they think nothing impossible when their master commands. This name of master, of which courtiers make an object of flattery and policy,

does not produce the same effect on a people almost Asiatic. The monarch being at the head of public worship, constitutes a part of their religion, and the peasants prostrate themselves before the Emperor, as they salute the church by which they pass; no servile feeling mingles itself with these demonstrations of their sentiments.

Thanks to the enlightened wisdom of the present sovereign, every possible amelioration will take place gradually in Russia. But nothing is more absurd than the observations commonly repeated by those who dread the enlightened ideas of Alexander. "Why," they exclaim, "does that Emperor, for whom the friends of liberty are such enthusiasts; why does he not establish at home the constitutional government which he recommends to other nations?" It is one of the thousand artifices of the enemies of human reason to endeavour to prevent what is possible and desirable for one nation, by demanding things that are impossible for another. There is as yet no *Tiers Etat* in Russia: how, then, could a representative government be established there? The intermediary class between the boyards and the people is almost entirely wanting. It would be possible to augment the power of the great nobles, and,

by so doing, destroy the work of Peter I; but that would be going back instead of forward; for the power of the Emperor, however absolute, is an amelioration in the state of society, compared to what the Russian aristocracy formerly was. Russia, in regard to civilization, has only attained that period of history in which, for the good of nations, it becomes necessary to limit the power of the privileged class by that of the crown. Thirty-six religions, including those that are pagan, and thirty-six different nations, are not collected, but scattered over an immense territory. On one hand, the Greek creed accords with perfect toleration, and, on the other, the vast space occupied by the population leaves every man the freedom of living according to his habits. There is not yet to be found, in this order of things, knowledge that could be concentrated, or individuals who could keep institutions in their regular course. The only tie which unites nations who are almost in a pastoral state, and whose dwellings appear like wooden tents erected in the plain, is respect for the monarch, and national pride. Other ties will be successively brought forth by time.

I was at Moscow exactly a month before Napoleon's army entered its walls; and I did

not dare to remain but a very short time, fearing its immediate approach. When walking on the top of the Kremlin, the palace of the ancient Czars, which commands the vast capital of Russia and its eighteen hundred churches, I thought it was the lot of Bonaparte to see empires at his feet, as Satan offered them to our Saviour. But it was when there remained nothing more for him to conquer in Europe, that Fate seized upon him, and made him fall with as much rapidity as he had risen. Perhaps he has since learned, that whatever may be the events in the earlier scenes, there is a potency in virtue which always re-appears at the fifth act of the tragedy; as, among the ancients, the knot was severed by a god, when the action was worthy of his intervention.

The admirable perseverance of the Emperor Alexander in refusing the peace which Bonaparte offered him, according to his practice when victorious; the energy of the Russians, who set fire to Moscow, that the martyrdom of one holy city might redeem the Christian world; certainly contributed greatly to the misfortunes of Bonaparte's troops in the retreat from Russia. But it was that cold, that "cold of Hell," such as is pictured by Dante, that alone could annihilate the army of Xerxes.

We who have French hearts had accustomed ourselves, during the fifteen years of the tyranny of Napoleon, to consider his armies beyond the Rhine as no more belonging to France. They no longer defended the interests of the nation, they only served the ambition of one man; there was nothing in that which could awaken the love of their country; and far from wishing for the triumph of those troops, a great part of whom were foreigners, their defeat might be considered as a blessing even for France. Besides, the more we are attached to liberty in our own country, the more we feel that it is impossible to rejoice in victories the result of which must be the oppression of other nations. But who can hear a description of the evils which overwhelmed the French in the war of Russia, without heart-rending sorrow?

Incredible man!—he had witnessed sufferings from which thought recoils, he knew that the French grenadiers, whom Europe never names but with respect, became the sport of Jews and of some old women at Wilna, so much was their physical strength weakened, long before they could breathe their last; he received proofs of respect and of attachment from that army, when they were perishing for him one by one; and he refused, six months after, at Dresden, a

peace which would leave him master of France as far as the Rhine, and of the whole of Italy. He had come rapidly to Paris, after the retreat from Russia, to collect new forces, having, with firmness, more theatrical than natural, crossed Germany, where he was detested, but still feared. In his last bulletin he had given an account of the disasters of his army, which he had rather exaggerated than concealed. He is a man who delights so much in calling forth strong emotions, that when he cannot conceal his losses, he exaggerates them in order to do always more than another. During his absence, a conspiracy was formed against him (that of Mallet), the most generous of which the history of the French Revolution presents an example; and which, therefore, terrified him more than the coalition itself. Alas! why did not this patriotic conspiracy succeed? France would have had the glory of freeing herself, and it would not have been under the ruins of the country that her oppressor would have been crushed.

General Mallet was a friend to liberty, and attacked Bonaparte on that ground. Bonaparte was well aware that none was more dangerous for him; and when he returned to Paris, he talked of nothing but *ideologie*. He had con-

ceived a horror for this very innocent word, because it meant the theory of thought. It was singular enough to dread nothing but what he called the *ideologists*, at a moment when all Europe was armed against him. It would have been noble if, in consequence of this fear, he had sought, in preference to every thing, for the esteem of philosophic minds; but he detested every man capable of an independent opinion. Even in a political point of view, he leaned too much to the belief that men were to be governed only by their interest; this old maxim, however common it may be, is often false. The greater number of those on whom Bonaparte had heaped places and wealth deserted his cause; but his soldiers, attached to him by his victories, did not abandon him. He laughed at enthusiasm; and yet it was by enthusiasm, or at least military fanaticism, that he was supported. The frenzy of battles, which has something of greatness even in its excess, constituted the only strength of Bonaparte. Nations can never be in the wrong; a vicious principle never acts long on the mass: men are perverse only individually.

Bonaparte performed, or rather the nation performed for him, a miracle: notwithstanding his immense losses in Russia, a new army was

created in less than three months, which was able to march into Germany, and to gain battles anew. It was then that the demon of pride and folly took possession of Bonaparte in such a manner, that reasoning, founded on his own interest, can no longer explain the motives of his conduct: it was at Dresden that he mistook the last apparition of his tutelary genius.

The Germans, long indignant, rose at length against the French, who occupied their territory; national pride, the great strength of human nature, again displayed itself among the sons of Germany. Bonaparte was then taught what becomes of allies who have been constrained by force; and that, whatever is not voluntary, is destroyed at the first reverse of fortune. The sovereigns of Germany fought with the intrepidity of soldiers; and it seemed as if the Prussians and their warlike King were animated by the remembrance of the personal insult offered some years before by Bonaparte to their beautiful and virtuous queen.

The liberation of Germany had long been the object of the wishes of the Emperor of Russia. When the French were repulsed from his country, he devoted himself to this cause, not only as a sovereign, but as a general; and he several times exposed his life, not in the cha-

racter of a monarch guarded by his courtiers, but in that of an intrepid soldier. Holland welcomed her deliverers, and recalled that house of Orange, whose princes are now, as heretofore, the defenders of independence, and the magistrates of liberty. Whatever was the influence at this period of the English victories in Spain, we shall speak elsewhere of Lord Wellington; for we must pause at that name; we cannot take an incidental notice of it.

Bonaparte returned to Paris; and even at this moment France might have been saved. Five members of the Legislative Assembly, Gallois, Raynouard, Flaugergues, Maine de Biran, and Lainé, asked for peace at the peril of their lives. Each of those persons might be designated by his particular merit; and the last I have named, Lainé, perpetuates every day by his conduct and talents the remembrance of an action which alone would suffice to honour any character. If the Senate had joined with the five members of the Legislative Body, and the generals had supported the Senate, France would have been the disposer of her own fate; and whatever course she had taken, she would have remained France. But fifteen years of tyranny subvert every idea, and change every sentiment; the very men who would expose so nobly their lives in war, are

not aware that the same courage, and the same honour, command resistance in the civil career to the enemy of all despotism.

Bonaparte answered the deputation of the Legislative Body with a kind of concentrated fury; he expressed himself ill, but his pride was seen to pierce through his confused language. He said "that France wanted him more than he wanted France;" forgetting that it was himself who had reduced her to that state. He added, "that a throne was but a piece of wood, upon which a carpet was spread, and that all depended on the person by whom it was occupied." In short, he continued to appear intoxicated with himself. A singular anecdote, however, might lead us to believe that he was already struck with that stupor which seems to have taken possession of his character during the last crisis of his political life. A person worthy of credit told me, that, conversing with him alone, the day before his departure for the army, in the month of January, 1814, when the allies had already entered France, Bonaparte confessed in this private interview that he did not possess the means of resisting; they discussed the question, and Bonaparte showed him, without reserve, the worst side of things; and, what will scarcely be

believed, he fell asleep while talking on such a subject, without any preceding fatigue that could explain so singular an apathy. This did not prevent his displaying an extreme activity in his campaign of 1814; he suffered himself, no doubt, to be misled by a presumptuous confidence; and, on the other hand, physical existence, through enjoyments and facilities of all kinds, had gained possession of this man, formerly so intellectual. His soul seemed in some sort to have become gross along with his body. His genius now pierced only at intervals through that covering of egotism which a long habit of being considered every thing had made him acquire. He sunk under the weight of prosperity, before he was overthrown by misfortune.

It is pretended that he would not consent to relinquish the conquests which had been made by the Republic, and that he could not bring himself to allow that France should be weakened under his reign. If this consideration determined him to refuse the peace that was offered to him at Chatillon, in March, 1814, it is the first time that the idea of a duty acted on his mind; and his perseverance on this occasion, however imprudent, would deserve some esteem. But it rather appears, that he relied too much on his talents, after having had some success in

Champagne, and that he concealed from himself, as might have been done by one of his flatterers, the difficulties he had to surmount. They were so much accustomed to fear him, that none of them durst acquaint him with the things that interested him the most. If he happened to assert that in such a place there was a body of twenty thousand French, no one had the courage to inform him that there were only ten thousand; if he observed that the Allies were only in such a number, no one ventured to prove that this number was double. His despotism was such, that he had reduced men to be but the echo of himself; and his own voice, returning to him from all sides, he was alone amidst the crowd that encircled him.

In short, he did not perceive that enthusiasm had passed from the left bank of the Rhine to the right; that he had no longer to do with undecided governments, but with irritated nations; and that, on his side, on the contrary, there was only an army, and no longer a nation; for in this great contest France remained neutral, without seeming to think that what regarded him regarded herself. The most warlike of nations saw, almost with indifference, the success of those very foreigners with whom they had often fought so gloriously; and the

inhabitants of the towns and villages gave but little aid to the French soldiers, not being able to persuade themselves that, after twenty-five years of victory, so strange an event as the entry of the Allies into Paris could ever happen. It did, however, happen! this terrible justice of destiny. The Allies were generous: Alexander, as we shall see hereafter, displayed a constant magnanimity. He was the first to enter the conquered city as a powerful protector, and as an enlightened philanthropist; but even in admiring him, who could be a Frenchman and not be overwhelmed with sorrow?

From the moment that the Allies crossed the Rhine, and penetrated into France, it seemed to me that the wishes of the friends of France ought to have been completely changed. I was then in London, and one of the English ministers asked me what were my wishes? I had the boldness to answer him that I wished that Bonaparte should be *victorious, and killed*. I found in Englishmen sufficient greatness of mind to have no need of concealing this French sentiment in their presence. I was, however, forced to hear, amidst the transports of joy with which the city of the conquerors resounded, that Paris had fallen into the power of the Allies. It seemed to me at that moment that there was no longer

a France: I thought the prediction of Burke accomplished, and that there where France existed we should henceforth see but an abyss. The Emperor Alexander, the Allies, and the constitutional principles adopted by the wisdom of Louis XVIII dissipated this sad foreboding.

Bonaparte then heard on all sides the truth, which had been so long kept in captivity. It was then that ungrateful courtiers deserved the contempt entertained by their master for the human race. If the friends of liberty respect public opinion, desire publicity, and seek every where for the sincere and free support of the national voice, it is because they know that only the vilest of souls appear in the secrets and intrigues of arbitrary power.

There was, however, something of grandeur in the farewell of Napoleon to his soldiers and to their eagles, so long victorious; his last campaign had been long and skilful; in short, the fatal illusion which connected with him the military glory of France, was not yet destroyed. The Congress at Paris has accordingly to reproach itself with having put him in a situation that admitted of his return. The representatives of Europe ought frankly to confess this fault; and it is unjust to make the French nation bear the blame. It was certainly without any sinister

intention that the ministers of the foreign powers allowed to hover over the throne of Louis XVIII a danger which threatened, at the same time, the whole of Europe. But why do not those who suspended this sword, plead guilty to the mischief which it caused?

A number of persons are firmly persuaded that Bonaparte, had he not attempted the war of Spain or that of Russia, would still be Emperor; and this opinion is flattering to the partisans of despotic power, who think that so fine a government cannot be overturned by the nature of things, but only by accidental causes. I have already said, what an attentive consideration of France will confirm, that Bonaparte stood in need of war to establish and preserve absolute power. A great nation would not have borne the monotonous and degrading pressure of despotism, if military glory had not incessantly animated or exalted the public mind. The continual promotion to various ranks, in which every class of the nation had the means of participating, rendered the conscription less painful to the peasantry. The interest perpetually excited by victory supplied the place of interest in other things; ambition was the active principle of government in its smallest ramifications; titles, money, power, all were

given by Bonaparte to the French in place of their liberty. But, to be enabled to deal around these disastrous indemnities, he required nothing less than Europe to devour. If Napoleon had been what one may term a rational tyrant, he would not have been able to struggle against the activity of the French, which required an object. He was a man condemned by his destiny either to the virtues of Washington or to the conquests of Attila: but it was easier to reach the confines of the civilized world than to stop the progress of human reason; and public opinion in France would soon have accomplished what was brought about by the arms of the Allies.

From this time forward it is not he alone who will occupy the history of which we aim at sketching a picture, and our ill-fated France is about to appear again after fifteen years, during which nothing was spoken of but the Emperor and his army. What reverses we have to describe! what evils we have to dread! We shall be obliged to require of Bonaparte once more an account of France, since that country, too confiding and too warlike, trusted her fate a second time in his hands.

In the different observations which I have made respecting Bonaparte, I have abstained

from his private life, with which I am unacquainted, and which does not concern the interests of France. I have not advanced a single doubtful point in regard to his history; for the calumnies thrown out against him seem to me still more vile than the adulations of which he was the object. I flatter myself with having estimated him as all public men ought to be estimated; with reference to the effects of their conduct on the prosperity, information, and morality of nations. The persecutions which Bonaparte made me undergo, have not, I can faithfully declare, at all biassed my opinion: on the other hand, I have rather felt a necessity for resisting that kind of fascination produced on the imagination by an extraordinary genius and a formidable destiny. I should even gladly have allowed myself to be led away by the satisfaction which lofty minds find in defending an unfortunate man, and by the pleasure of thus putting themselves more in opposition to the writers and speakers who, so lately prostrate before him, are now incessantly pouring abuse on him, keeping however, I imagine, a watchful eye on the height of the rocks which imprison him. But one cannot be silent in regard to Bonaparte even in the day of his misfortune, because his political doctrine

still reigns in the minds both of his enemies and his partisans. For of the whole inheritance of his dreadful power, there remains nothing to mankind but the baneful knowledge of a few secrets the more in the art of tyranny.

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